
THE AMAZING NEW CONSOLES MAG!!!
MEAN
MACHINES
£1.75
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9 770960 495000
THIS MONTH'S SPECIALS:
GAME GEAR PICS!
GAME BOY REVIEWS!
ROBOCOP II PREVIEW!
SIX PAGES OF TIPS!
SEGA
MEGADRIVE
GX4000
NINTENDO
GAMEBOY
ROBOCOP II
PART MAN!
PART MACHINE!
ALL ACTION!!!
FIRE+FORGET II
HIGH SPEED
DEATH AND DOOM
ON SEGA AND GX4000!
RAINBOW ISLANDS
UNBELIEVABLY
ADDICTIVE
MEGADRIVE ACTION!
AMAZING FREE
AUDIO TAPE!!!
IT'S THE OFFICIAL
SEGA MASTERMIX!!!


EUROPE
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play... and replay

... and play and play and play.

**The SEGA MEGA DRIVE Games Console is like that.
You think you've mastered it. Hey, after all, it's only a 'game.'
You're feeling good — huh, man vs box of microchips ... Do me a favour ...
Then it wipes the floor with you, leaves you feeling like so much
dirty laundry and laughs in your face ... loser.**

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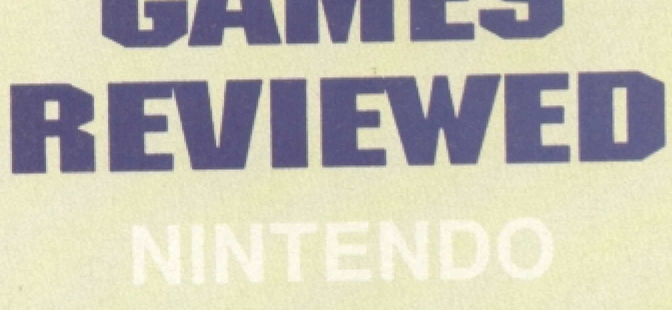
Selfridges, Toys 'R' Us, Virgin Games Centres and independent computer stores.

CONTENT

MEAN MACHINES NOVEMBER ISSUE TWO







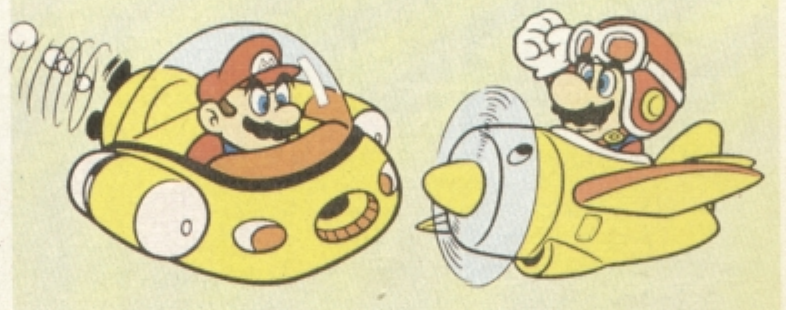
NINTENDO

SEGA

MEGADRIVE

GX4000

GAMEBOY



▶ *Strider flies in for a four page review on p18.*

THE US GOLD RUSH 90

Those wonderful people at US Gold are giving away their four excellent games - and a Master System to play them on! You'd be a 'nana to miss out on this one, so get scribbling.



PHONE LINES 32

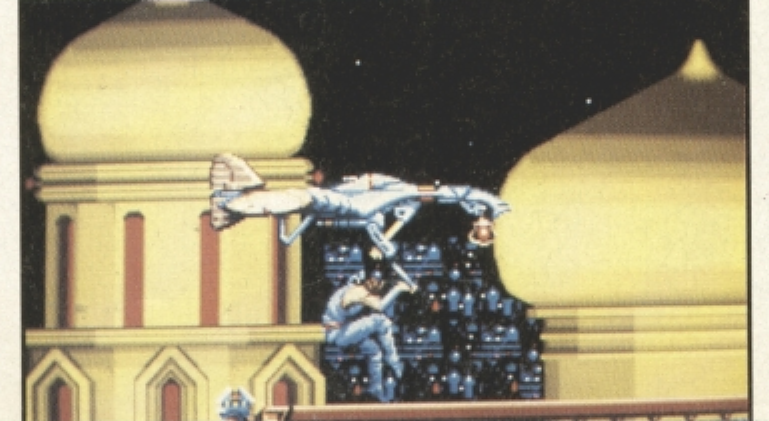
With a few pushes of your digits you could snap yourself up one of the incredible prizes on offer this month. Don't delay, call today!

ROBOCOP II 92

The man in the metal is back! See piccies of the GX4000 and Nintendo versions of this long-awaited sequel in this comprehensive preview!

HELLFIRE 94

ZAP! WHANG! KERPOW! An amazing shoot 'em up for the Megadrive is previewed with the incredible MEAN MACHINES in-depth style. Check it out, man!



HELLO AND WELCOME TO THE BIG NUMBER TWO!!!

WHO DUNNIT

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THANKS THIS MONTH TO: Cecil, Nora, Hubert, Cuthbert, Penelope, Archibald, Orville, Norbert and Clarence for having such silly names.

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COMPETITION RULES

No EMAP employees or their immediate kin may enter, but everyone else can, apart from Dwayne Minton of West Wormwood because nobody likes him and his feet smell, especially on a Friday. The Editor's decision is final, and no correspondence shall be entered into. So you can grizzle and scream until you wet your pants, but you won't get anywhere.

FINALLY

Matt says that it was his girlfriend Lisa who put the go-slower stripes down the side of his Escort. I say it was a black Granada. Jazza's new car is now fully run in, so make sure you use the green cross code when crossing the road, just in case a long-haired nutter in a red Peugeot GTI just happens to be in the area. By the way, Oz and Gary can't drive. Just as well, really. Britain's roads would never be safe again...

Wotcher mates! It's MEAN MACHINES issue two, and we're really sizzling this month, with a brilliant free audio tape to slap into your Walkman and deafen yourself with.

What else have we got? Well, we've got a four-page review of Strider, the latest and possibly greatest Megadrive game to come from Japan, as well as Rainbow Islands, another whopper Megadrive conversion. We've also got the first MEAN MACHINES Game Boy reviews - the five titles that have officially been launched in this country are all scrutinised. As to the latest Game Boy games to be shipped in from Japan, well, you'll just have to wait until next month to get the full run-down.

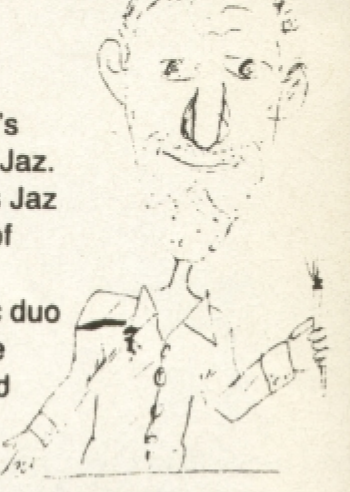
Changing the subject, thanks to everyone who's written in to MEAN MACHINES last month. All your letters and pictures are greatly appreciated. Mean Yob's printed the best of them in the mailbag column, plus Jaz answers a whole load of questions in Q+A and the Tips Helpline. If you've written in, check out those sections and see if your name's in this mag! Keep 'em coming in!

Okay! That's the end of this bit - now you can get on with reading the rest of the mag.

Later, dudes.

PICTURE SPECIAL

You've all seen Gary Harrod's cartoon pictures of Matt and Jaz. But what you haven't seen is Jaz and Matt's cartoon pictures of Gary Harrod. Here's what happened when the dynamic duo managed to get hold of some crayons and finger paints and attempted to draw MEAN MACHINES' illustrator...



EARLYBIRD CATCHES THE JAZ

If you were watching Earlybird on Channel 4 earlier this month, you would have seen Jaz being interviewed by two console fans in the Virgin Games Centre in Tottenham Court Road in London. What were his hot tips for the best presents this Christmas? Well, any machine with a Sega or Nintendo badge on it of course!

WHERE'S THE NINTENDO AND AMSTRAD SONGS?

Sega owners will no doubt be grooving away to the cer-a-zee sounds of the Do Me a Favour Mastermix tape which was free on the cover. But what about all you Nintendo and GX4000 owners? Well, at present there are no official songs from either of those companies - but if they come up with some, we'll stick them on the front cover.



JULIAN "JAZ" RIGNALL
MEAN MACHINES' gamesplaying expert and resident techno-hippy. He's got more hair than an average Yeti and is the proud owner of an advanced degree in End-of-Level Guardian Tactics. Any spare time he has is devoted to playing games. He likes them quite a lot...
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: STRIDER, HELLFIRE, POPULOUS, BUBBLE BOBBLE, PIT FIGHTER (ARCADES).

MATTHEW "MATT" REGAN
This guy's got a brain the size of a planet and knows how to get through any game requiring the old grey matter. He's also an expert at burning up the freeways of East London. His supa-powered Escort has distinctive black go-a-bit-slower-next-time stripes down one side.
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: POPULOUS, AXIS, TRUXTON

OZ "DON'T WORRY" BROWNE
He's the Art Editor - which means that he sticks down all the pages and makes sure they look all fab 'n' brill. Which indeed they do. He's also a Megadrive owner, so whenever any games are missing from the office we know where to look - in his bedroom!
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: REVENGE OF SHINOBI, STRIDER, BATMAN, HELLFIRE

GARY "CRAYONS" HARROD
He draws all the pictures in MEAN MACHINES and also is responsible for painting the covers. But he's not only good with a pencil - he also knows how to wield a joystick. When he's not scribbling away, he's usually found lurking in the games room playing the latest arcade conversions.
CURRENT FAVE GAMES: BATMAN, HELLFIRE, STRIDER, AXIS

THE MARKS

90+
A MEAN MACHINES MEGAGAME! A completely superb game which shouldn't be missed.

80-89
A very, very good game which just misses out on the Megagame award due to minor deficiencies. Definitely try it.

65-79
A pretty good game which should still appeal to fans of the genre.

45-64
An average game - might disappoint some fans.

30-44
Below average. Very few players will get much entertainment.

15-29
A very poor game indeed which will only be played a few times before being shelved.

14-
An utterly ghastly travesty which should be avoided at all costs.

AWARDS



MEGAGAME
When you see this on a review, it means that the game has gained the highest award MEAN MACHINES can bestow. And if the game is for your machine, you better start saving for it now!



CLASSIC
This is given to a golden oldie which MEAN MACHINES decides to review. Although the game has been out for a while, if you haven't got it in your collection, you're missing out.

MATT FLIES UNDONE
On a recent trip to America, Matt went to Martha's Vineyard - a strange place famous for several interesting and exciting things. Brother of assassinated President JF Kennedy, Ted, crashed off a bridge there, Jaws was filmed there and ancient sixties pop group Martha and the Vandellas lived there. But most amazing thing of all is that Matt flew a 1930's bi-plane right over it without crashing! Matt, a recognised joystick juggler, said, "it was a bit wobbly, but my firm hand saw us through". Here's a pic before take-off...



THE RATINGS

RATINGS WORK

Here at MEAN MACHINES we are committed to giving you the most in-depth console reviews possible. Here's how they work.

GAME DIFFICULTY: This tells you how easy or tough the game is. If you're a novice player, easy games should keep you happy. If you're a veteran joystick-jockey, medium or hard games are recommended.

LIVES: Tells you how many times can you die and still return from the grave.

CONTINUES: Tells you how often you can restart from where you died. Beware: too many continues can allow you to finish the game too quickly, and seriously damage your enjoyment.

SKILL LEVELS: Many games let you fix the difficulty level for yourself, so you can increase the challenge if you get good at it. This tells you how many skill levels there are.

RESPONSIVENESS: Is it humanly possible to avoid that mutant's death-beam, or does the joystick refuse to obey your frantic commands? This section lets you know!

PRESENTATION: This is an important part of any game. Are the instructions clear (and in English)? Do the option screens make sense and look pretty? Is the screen well laid out? Is there plenty of in-game info? This rating tells you all.

GRAPHICS: This includes not only the quality of the sprites and their animation, but the backgrounds as well. Graphics are judged not only on their prettiness, but on how well they are suited to the game.

SOUND: The difference between a booming, catchy intro tune and a few weak bleeps that sound like a dying Spectrum is indicated here. Music and effects can make a big difference to a game, so don't ignore this factor.

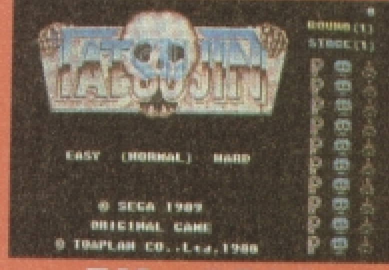
PLAYABILITY: Some games you just can't stop playing, no matter how late at night it is. This measures the addictiveness of the game, and how much you'll think about it - even when you're not playing it!

LASTABILITY: You don't want to spend your cash on something that will only last a week. Check this box out to judge if you are going to be playing it in a month, or be bored with it within a week.

OVERALL: This is it. This mark takes into account all the above ratings and acts as a guide to the game's overall quality. If a game scores over 90%, it's a Megagame and is well worth buying!

PLAYERS: Simply tells you how many players can play the game - either simultaneously, or one after the other.

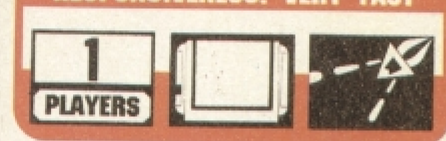




BY: SEGA

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY/MED
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: UNLIMITED
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: VERY FAST



PRESENTATION 71%
Three skill levels, but little else.

GRAPHICS 82%
Bright, with well defined sprites

SOUND 74%
A decent, if rather tinny tune and basic effects.

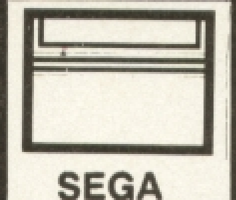
PLAYABILITY 85%
Easy enough to begin with, getting rapidly harder. Highly addictive stuff!

LASTABILITY 76%
Experienced blasters should be able to complete the game - if not, you'll certainly have fun trying.

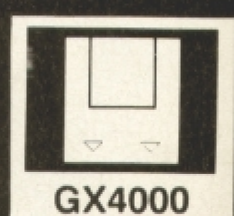
OVERALL 82%
A highly enjoyable blasting romp. Recommended to shoot 'em up fans.

FORMAT: This icon tells you what type of cartridge the game is on - here's the full list:

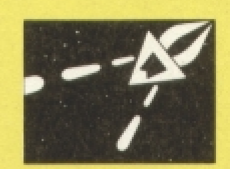

NINTENDO

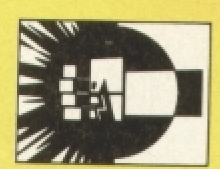

SEGA


MEGADRIVE


GX4000

GAME TYPE: These nifty icons show you what sort of game it is - here's the full list:

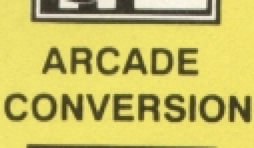

SHOOT 'EM UP


BEAT 'EM UP

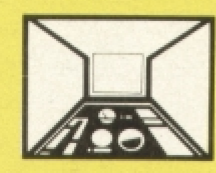

SPORTS GAME


ARCADE CONVERSION


PLATFORM GAME


PUZZLE GAME


DRIVING GAME


SIMULATION


ROLE PLAYING ADVENTURES

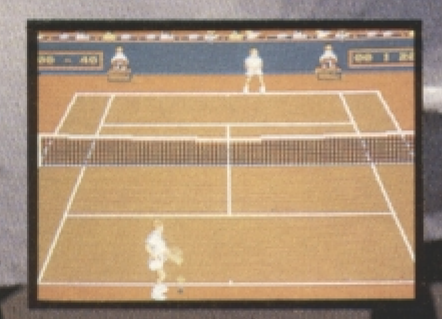
PRO TENNIS TOUR

Blue Byte

Attention all Amstrad console owners : PRO TENNIS TOUR, the most unbelievable "indoor" tennis game ever created is now available.

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR ?!?!?

THE ULTIMATE TENNIS SIMULATION







AMSTRAD CONSOLE GX400

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IBM
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CPC D / Tape

UBI SOFT

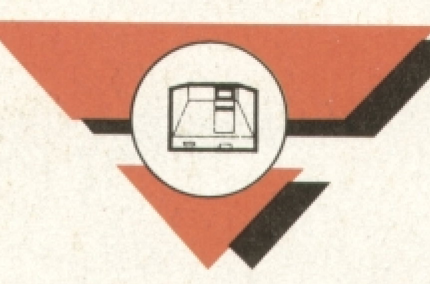
Entertainment Software

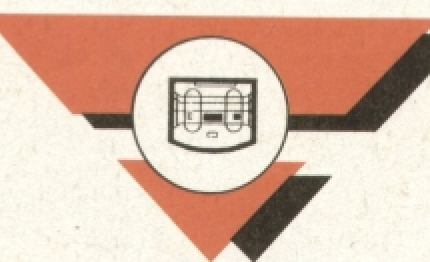
UBI SOFT UK Saddlers House 100 Reading Road Yateley Camberley SURREY GU17 7RX

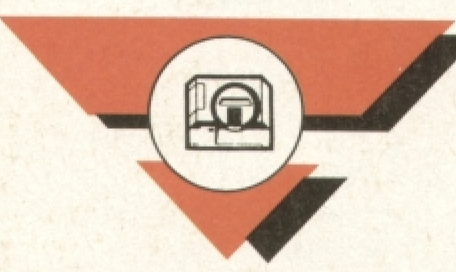
ニュース

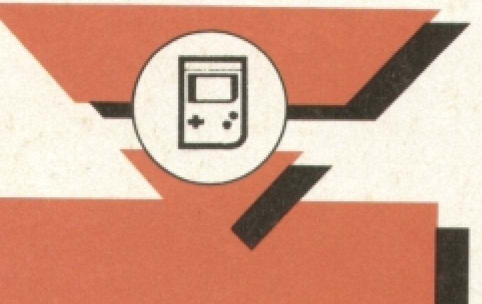
NEWS







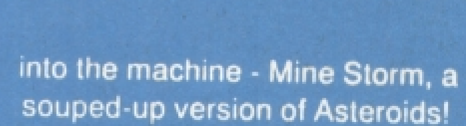




CONSOLES WE ONCE LOVED
NUMBER TWO: VECTREX

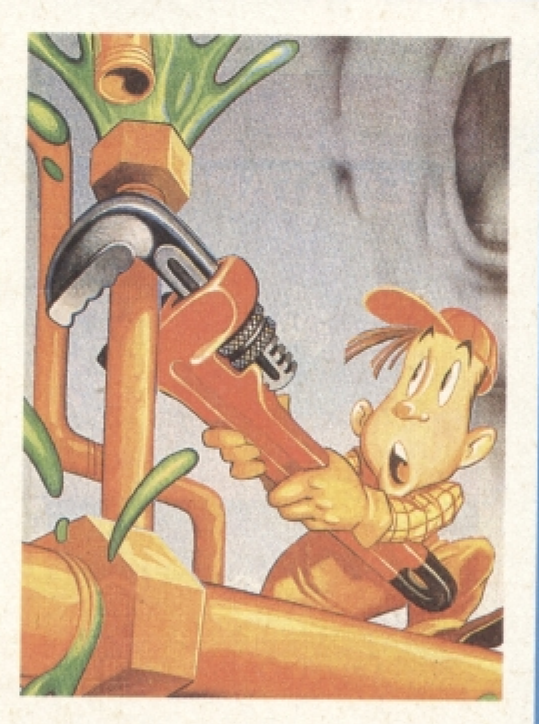
This very unusual, but neat little console was launched in 1981 and it cost around £120.00. Rather than use the normal raster-type images your Nintendo or Sega produces on a TV, it had its own special compact black and white Vector monitor, which drew the graphics in sharp, straight lines like the old Star Wars and Asteroids arcade machines.

There were a variety of very playable games available for it, nearly all conversions of vector graphic coin-ops - Rip Off, Armour Attack and Star Trek were amongst the best, but there were some more unusual games in the form of Pinball, a vector graphic pinball game, and a vector version of the classic Atari racing game, Pole Position. One of the greatest games available was actually built into the machine - Mine Storm, a souped-up version of Asteroids!



The Vectrex built up a strong following both in the UK and the US, but the company that distributed the machine ran into difficulties in 1983, and the line was discontinued. A shame, really, since the machine had a lot of potential, and a load of new peripherals like 3D glasses and a light pen were just being developed for the machine when production ceased.

If you ever see one for sale second hand for a reasonable price - say £30 with some games - it's well worth getting!



PIPING HOT GAMEBOY

Bulletproof Software, the folks behind Tetris on the Gameboy, have announced the forthcoming release of Pipe Dream on the same hand-held. Better known as Pipemania in this country, this addictive game casts you as a plumber who must place sections of pipe in order to contain the flow of ooze that is about to commence. No easy task, as the stuff only flows in one direction! Expect a report on this next ish.



GROOVY GAME GEAR

Sega's answer to the Gameboy has just been launched in Japan. It's a colour hand-held games machine which is based around Sega Master System technology, squeezed into a small enough box to allow you to take it with you wherever you go.

The machine is quite small, a is ergonomically designed to be comfortable to hold. On the left o the machine is the joypad controller, on the right are two fire buttons and the start switch, and in the middle is a full-colour back-lit high resolution screen. It's very bright, and features a dimmer switch which changes the angle of the screen - useful if you're playing with the machine flat on a table.





It takes six batteries, and their life is about six hours, which isn't too bad, but can still work out to be quite costly if you play it all the time. It's a wise move to carry the mains adaptor around with you to connect to a power supply whenever you get near a plug.

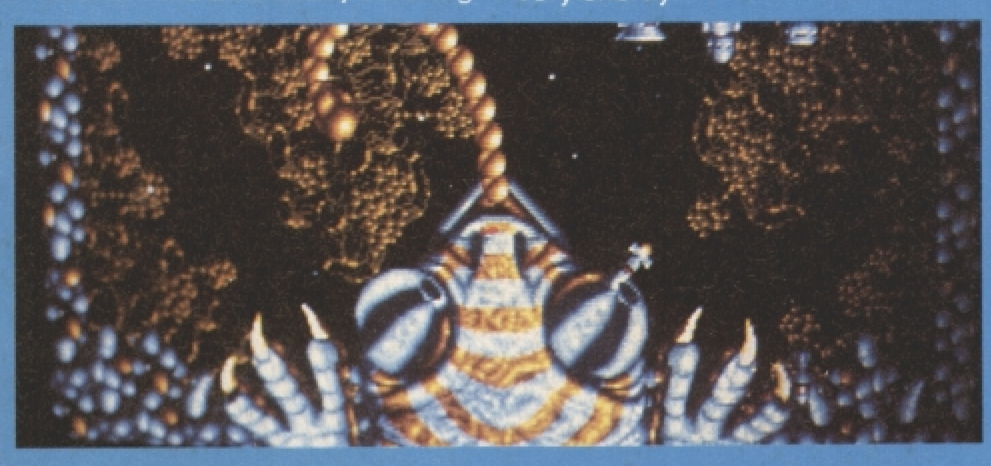
But what of the games? Well, the three titles which were launched with the machine are Columns, Super Monaco GP and Pengo. Columns is virtually identical to the Sega Master System version that's reviewed

SPEED, FUTURE AND XENON TOO

Mirrorsoft are about to release three new Sega Master System games. First up is Back to the Future II, which is based on the blockbusting movie which has just hit big on video. The player takes the role of time travelling Marty McFly and must battle through five levels of action to save the day. The computer versions of the game were very average, but it's hoped that the Sega version will be tweaked for the better.

Xenon II is a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up which was very successful on 16-bit computer format when it appeared at the end of last year. The graphics are superb, and hopefully all the thrills and spills of the original will be retained.

Finally, and the game which will appear first, is Speedball, a simulation of a violent sport of the future. An overhead viewpoint is used as the player controls a team of big 'n' beefy players whose aim is to throw a steel ball into the opponent's net. The game looks superb, with rough 'n' tough action all the way. Watch out for a review very shortly.





later on in the mag, with the same graphics and sound and only the two-player option missing. It's a very addictive game, and is as well suited to the Game Gear as Tetris is to the Gameboy!

Super Monaco GP is again very similar to its Sega Master System counterpart. Gone are the split screens and two-player action, but the graphics and game set-up are exactly the same. It's quite good fun, but the lack of real excitement lets the game down.

Finally, Pengo is a conversion of the cute, but ageing arcade classic, which has you shunting ice blocks around a single screen attempting to squash all the baddies before they grab you. It's a superb conversion, and is pretty addictive if you've never played it before.

Other titles coming out on the Game Gear are G-LOC (which looks suspiciously similar to Sega Master System Afterburner), Wonderboy and Soko-Ban.

Another wonder-widget that'll be available for the machine is the TV adaptor, which plugs into the cartridge slot and turns the machine into a mini television set. Quite a neat idea really.

NEW NINTENDO JOYSTICKS

Spectravideo have announced a new range of joysticks for console owners. Both sticks, designed for the Nintendo system, feature LED displays to show when the fire button is used, and in which direction you're moving. The Ni. PRO has ten micro switches and the Ni. 5 six; both have "ergonomically designed hand grips" (that means you can hold them easily!). The retail price? The Ni. 5 costs £15.95, and the Ni. PRO weighs in at £19.95.



MEAN, CLEAN MACHINES

If you've got those "Old Dirty Console Blues", fear no more. Naki Industries are about to launch The Eliminator, a super console cleaning kit which allows you to restore your machine (whether it's a Nintendo, Sega, Gameboy or Megadrive) to tip-top condition. The problem is, you see, the copper pins on the machine's edge connectors can oxidize (that's get rusty to you and me), restricting the flow of the tiny electric signals that go from the machine to the game cartridge, which can cause horrible things like crashed games and no-loads.

The Eliminator costs £17.50 (inc p&p) and is available from Naki Industries UK, 193 Hampden Way, Southgate, London, N14 7NG - don't forget to state which machine you own.

If you fancy winning one of these cleaning kits, why not enter this mini-comp. We've got ten of them to give away, courtesy of those natty Naki dudes. All you have to do to stand a chance of winning is answer this simple question: What does oxidize mean? Put the answer down on a postcard or sealed-down envelope and send it to: DO THE SHAKE AND VAC AND GET THE FRESHNESS BACK, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU!

50P OFF SHOPPER SHOW

If you're interested in going to the Computer Shopper Show next month, you can save 50p on the ticket price thanks to us! Just cut out the coupon (aaagh) and take it to the door. Simple, eh?

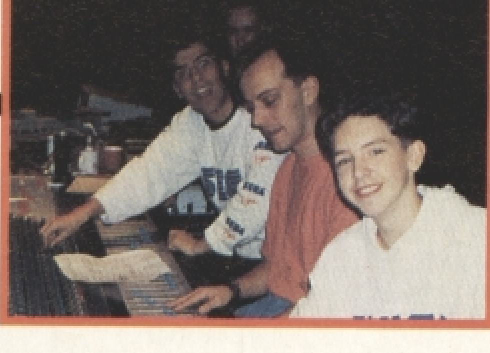
COMPUTER SHOPPER SHOW '90
Wembley, London • 6-9 December

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50p OFF

Or alternatively worth £4 off a family ticket
Thursday 10am – 6pm, Friday 10am – 6pm
Saturday 9am – 6pm, Sunday 10am – 5pm



DO ME A FAVOUR

So you've listened to the free Do Me a Favour Sega Mastermix tape that was on the front of the magazine? We bet you're wondering what the story is behind this musical masterpiece. Well, whether you are or not - here it is...

Once upon a time, Sir Phillip of Ley, Grande Fromage de Sega and friend of the stars decided to run a super musical tournament. The entrants had to come up with a fine Sega ballard, and the prize was to be able to "lay down" the "track" in a professional recording studio and have the honour of the tape being placed on the front of the World's greatest consoles magazine - MEAN MACHINES!

Entries flooded in from all the shires of Blighty, and Sir Phillip and the lovely maiden Lesly Walker lent their ears unto the mountain of tapes. After much "playback", the winners were chosen. And lo, there was much ringing of bells and consumption of mead in the streets of Kingston-Upon-Thames as townsmen, MC Nick and MC Steve, were declared champions of this musical tourney.

In time, the pair of bards journeyed to London Town to have their shanty professionally recorded in Virgin's Townhouse 3 studio by knaves Ben and Jeremy, engineers of melody. Over the next two days, there was much a-sampling and a-crooning as the MC's "put down" the vocals on a multi-tracked recording implement. It took an entire day to record the canticle, and a further day to mix all the sounds together to produce the veritable rap anthem that's on the tape.

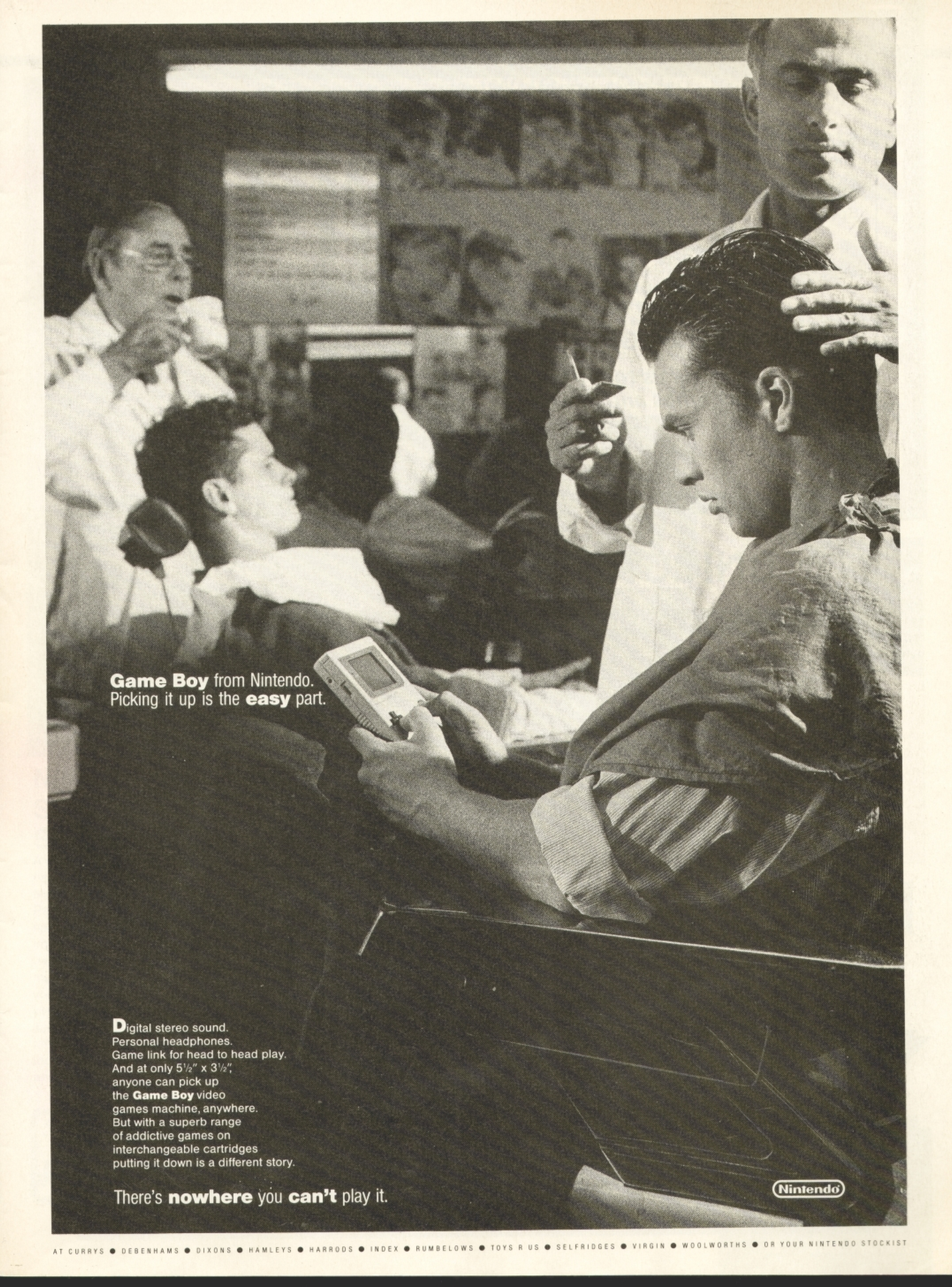
At the end of the session, MC Nick and MC Steve were each rewarded with a Megadrive for their supreme efforts, and many broad grins were in evidence.

And they all lived happily ever after.








Game Boy from Nintendo.
Picking it up is the easy part.
Digital stereo sound. Personal headphones. Game link for head to head play. And at only 5½" x 3½", anyone can pick up the Game Boy video games machine, anywhere. But with a superb range of addictive games on interchangeable cartridges putting it down is a different story.
There's nowhere you can't play it.
Nintendo
AT CURRYS ● DEBENHAMS ● DIXONS ● HAMLEYS ● HARRODS ● INDEX ● RUMBELOWS ● TOYS R US ● SELFRIDGES ● VIRGIN ● WOOLWORTHS ● OR YOUR NINTENDO STOCKIST

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BURNING FORCE	*BATMAN*	*PAPERBOY*	*VIETNAM 1975*
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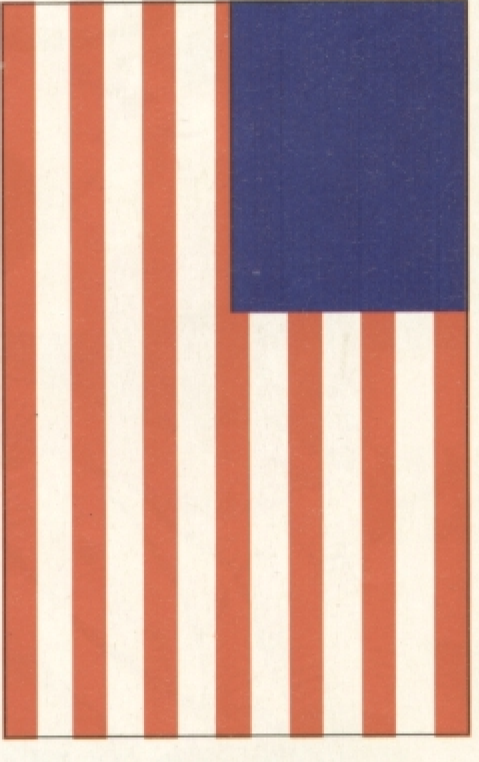
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ニュース



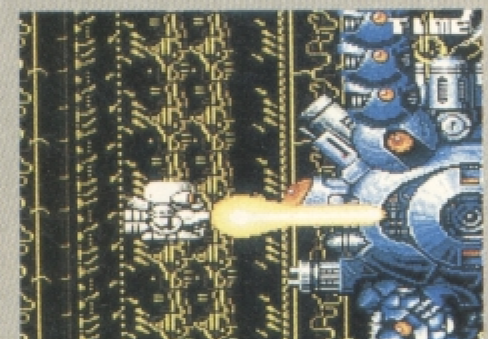


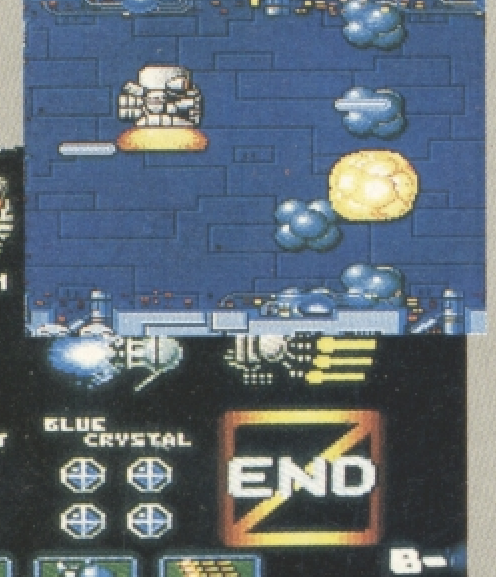
FROM USA



ATOMIC ROBO-KID
アトミック・ロボキッド

The conversion of the Atomic Robokid coin-op has been in the pipeline for ages now, but it's finally about to be released on the Megadrive. It's a pretty neat shoot 'em up in which you guide the eponymous Robokid (who looks like a laser-packing dustbin) through levels and levels of action-packed murder and mayhem. The original coin-op was great fun, and the Megadrive version looks to be a pretty good conversion. Here's some pics to have an ogle at...

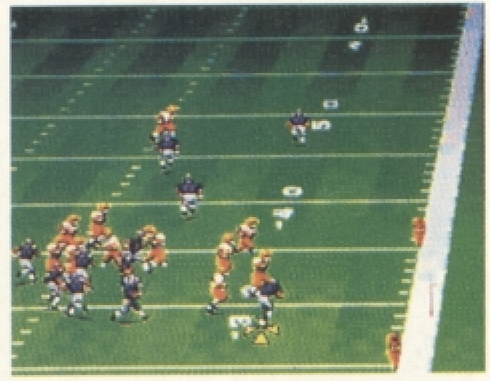






WHO IS JOHN MADDEN?

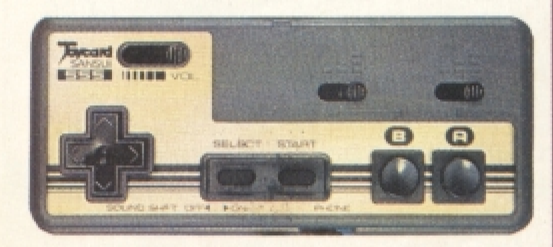
Coming soon to a Megadrive near you is John Madden's Football, a superb American football simulation which absolutely knocked the socks off the MEAN MACHINES team when it was brought in a few days ago. It features full-perspective 3D graphics, and some utterly brilliant music and sound effects courtesy of Rob Hubbard, one of the finest computer musicians in the world. It's easily the most impressive Megadrive yet seen. Want to know more about it? Then read the exclusive review in next month's MEAN MACHINES.





NINTENDO STEREO SOUNDS

A rather natty little doubrie which has just been released for the Nintendo in America is the Personal Stereo Controller. It's a special black and gold control pad into which you can plug a pair of headphones to hear super stereo music and sound effects. It's got volume and rapid fire switches and even stops the normal Nintendo sound being channelled to the telly! So no more complaints about too many loud explosions from Ma and Pa!



KEEP IT HARD

Tengen's conversion of the Hard Drivin' coin-op is soon to hit the Megadrive and Nintendo. For those who've never seen the coin-op, it's a filled-3D driving simulation which gives you the chance to drive like a nutter around a stunt and speed track. It's hoped that these console conversions will retain all the speed and playability of the original, and from what we've seen of the Nintendo version, it's looking very, very good indeed.

Here are some pics to gloat over. There's no release date for either versions in this country, but early next year is a pretty good bet.





HELLO, HELLO, HELLO. IT'S PC SEGA

Sega have just launched their first personal computer - the Tetra. It's a pretty high-powered IBM compatible machine which has the added bonus of being Megadrive compatible. Which means that once you've finished doing word processing or fiddling with boring spreadsheets, you can plug in the latest red-hot Megadrive conversion and play away to your heart's content. At the moment Sega have no plans to launch the machine in this country. Boo!



CHUBBY LICK

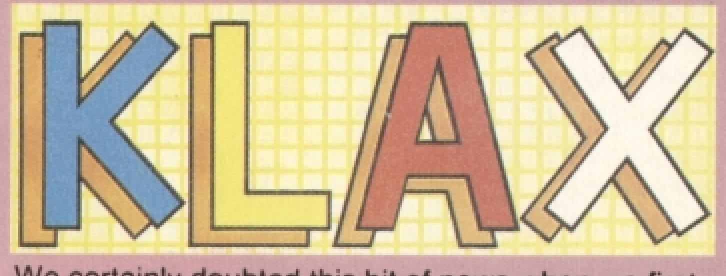
The very strangely-named Tongue of the Fatman has just been released in Japan (and is indeed available on import from most mail order specialists). It's basically a fighting game, and puts the player in a one-on-one combat situation with a variety of weird characters, ranging from a sexy dominatrix with living hair to a robot chicken. The graphics and animation are utterly superb, although the early levels of the game are very easy to beat.



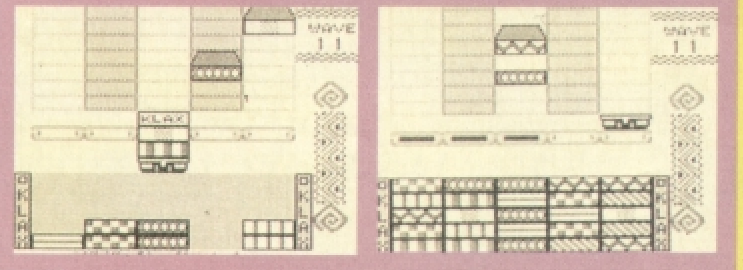


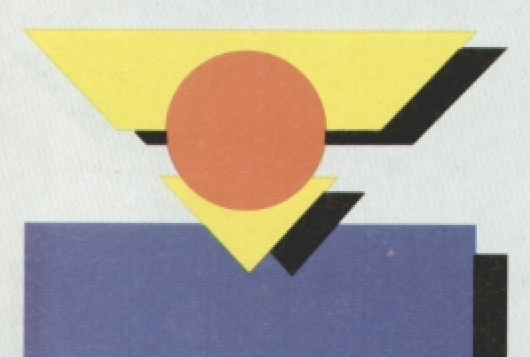
Double Dragon fans will be in seventh heaven when they hear that the third game in the series, Double Dragon III: The Rosetta Stone has just been released on Nintendo in Japan. The game gives you the choice of four different characters, and once again it's fightin' and fumpin' action all the way! It certainly looks good - we'll bring you more news as and when we have it!





We certainly doubted this bit of news when we first heard it, but apparently it's completely true. Klax will soon be appearing on the Gameboy! Instead of coloured tiles, the game features tiles of different patterns. It sounds like it'll be one hell of a hard game - we'll let you know as soon as we get our mitts on it.







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GREMLINS 2 POWERMONGER
STRIDER ROGUE TROOPER
12
9 770261 369017



REVIEW



▲ *Level one, and the Soviets are coming on strong.*



▲ *Level two. Note the quality of the backgrounds!*

It's the year 2048 and a mad Emperor has taken control of Russia. Glasnost has been thrown out of the window and world peace is threatened as he assembles his giant army of robots with the intent to take over Earth.

Only one person can save the day, and that's super commando Strider, an athletic chappie who's perfectly capable of destroying the entire army single-handedly - as long as the player has the skill to guide him through this hazardous mission.

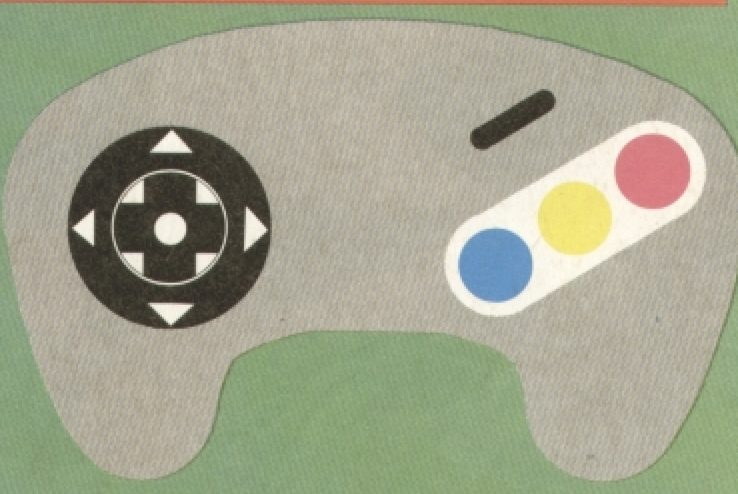
The action is set over five scrolling levels, each packed with human-looking androids, giant robots and huge gun emplacements. All are out to get the hero, and contact with either them or their bullets and weapons depletes Strider's energy bar.

Fortunately Strider is armed with a big sword which he can swing at an enemy to blow it up. There's also help in the form of drone ships which occasionally fly by - destroy them and a pod is exposed which, when collected, gives any one of a variety of weapons ranging from extra shot power and energy to bonus points and lives.

On the final level is the Emperor himself - destroy him and Glasnost will prevail. Fail and it's curtains for the free west as we know it.

ST

CONTROL

JUMP



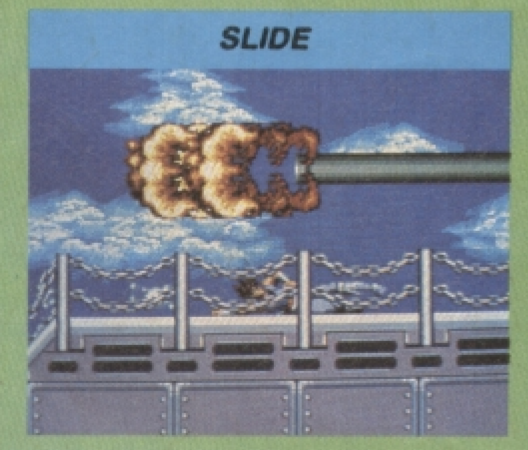
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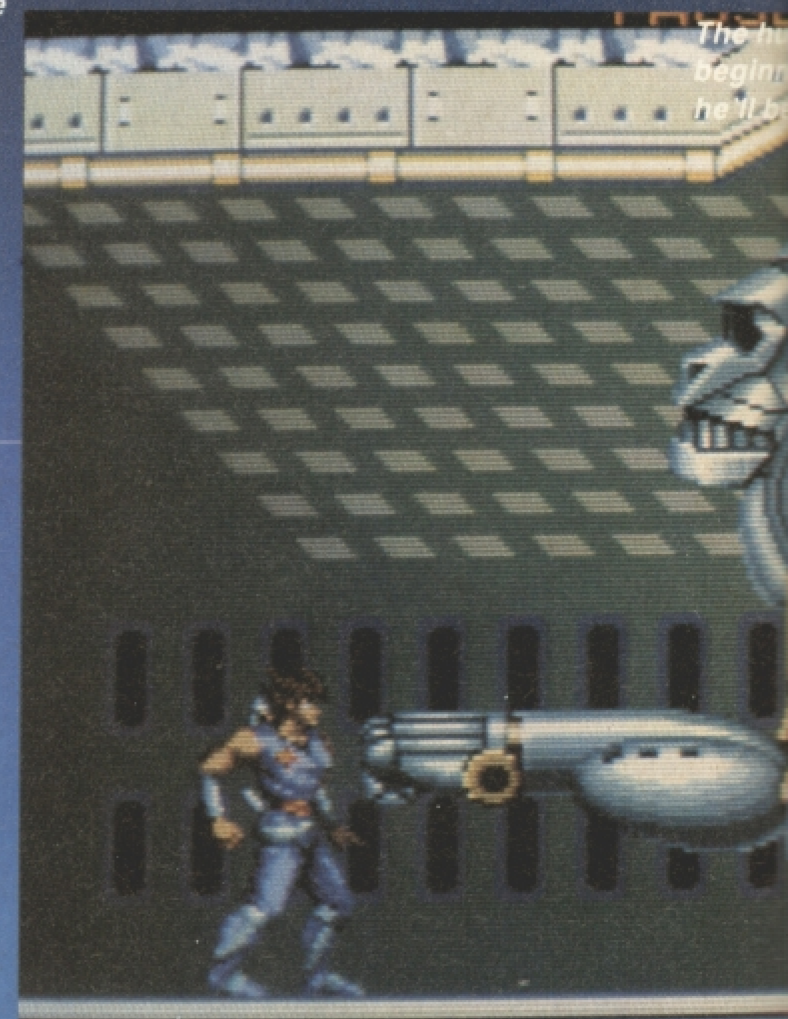
WALK



SLIDE

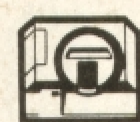


Strider is one of the most athletic dudes ever seen in the arcades. Not only can he run and jump, he can also slide along the ground (killing any baddies that get in his way), swing on any parts of buildings, scaffolding and gantries he can get a grip on and flip himself up onto a higher platform. He can also climb walls and, if there's a particularly large gap in the landscape, do a super cartwheel jump!


The h... beginn... he'll b...

If you're a big fan of the Strider arcade machine, you'll be pleased to hear that there are absolutely no differences between the Megadrive version and the arcade original! The sprites and backdrops are all the same size as the coin-op counterparts, and all the clever graphical effects - such as the "lights out" effect in the power station on level two - are present!





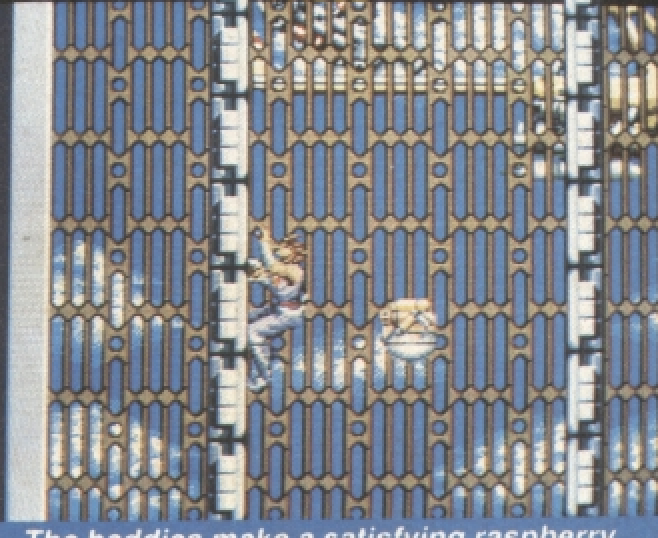
RIDER

MEGA GAME

...e robotic monkey that guards the ...g of level two - a few quick chops and ...e history.

▼ My, what a big thingy you've got!

▼ This game will drive you up the wall!



▼ The baddies make a satisfying raspberry noise when killed.



COMMENT

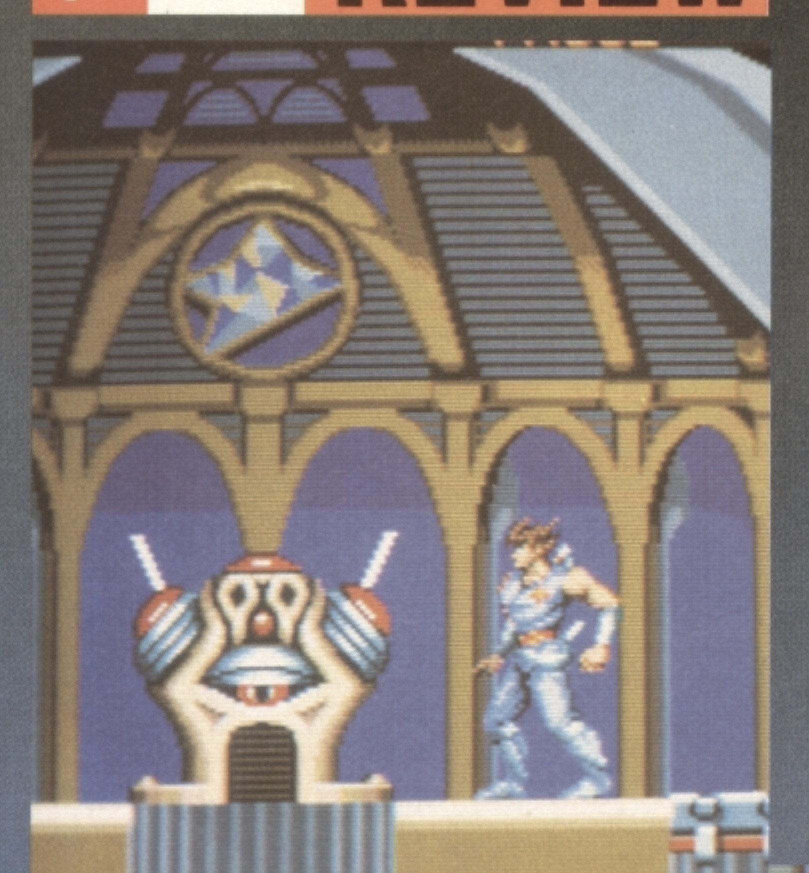


MATT

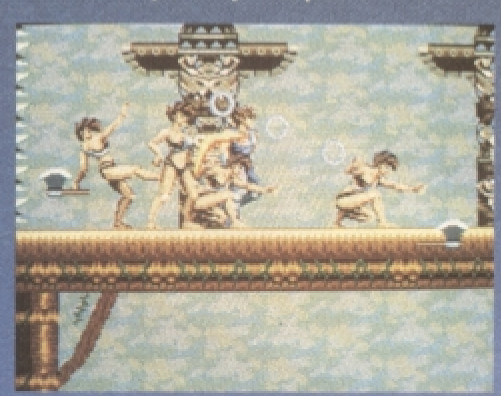
This Megadrive conversion is absolutely stunning in every respect. The main sprite is huge and well detailed, and the backgrounds are simply exquisite. My favourite level is the fourth, with Amazon warriors, piranhas, and massive dinosaurs to defeat. The difficulty is pitched just right, although my attention keeps wandering to look at the graphics - they're that good! The sampled speech between levels is the only thing missing, but this doesn't affect the quality of the gameplay in any way. If the arcade game blew you away, expect the same treatment from the Megadrive version.

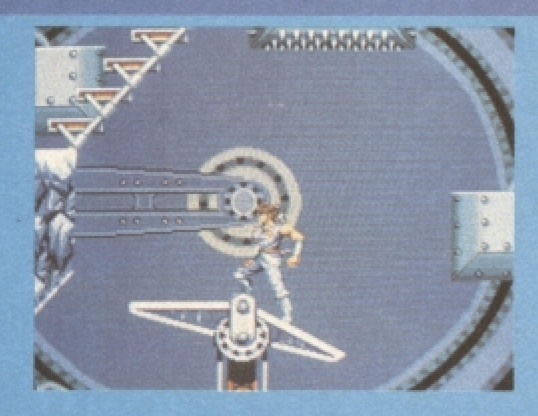
THANKS TO PC ENGINE SUPPLIES OF STOKE FOR SUPPLYING US WITH A COPY OF STRIDER.

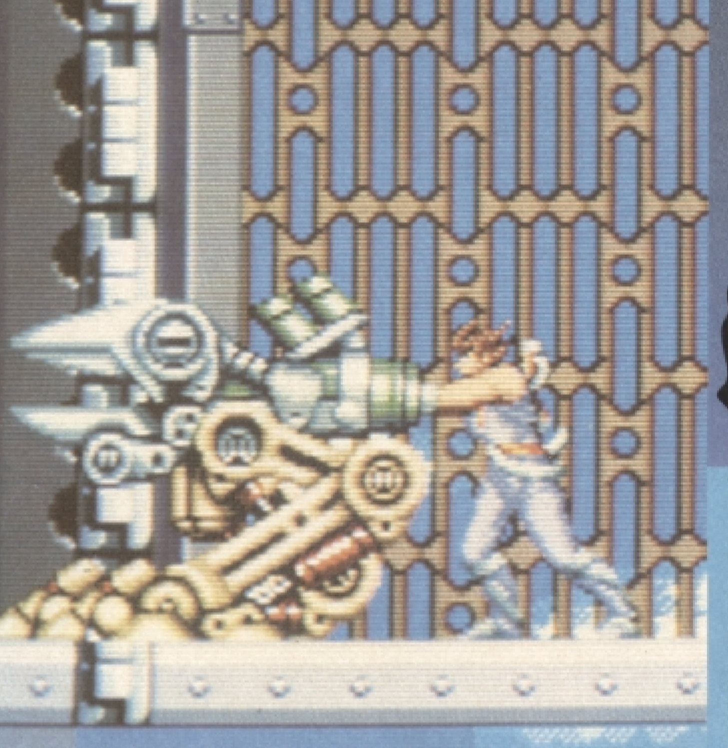
▼ *Slide, Charlie Brown, slide!*



▲ *Crouch down and slash the laser as quickly as possible.*







▲ *Push your stabber up the droid's botty!*

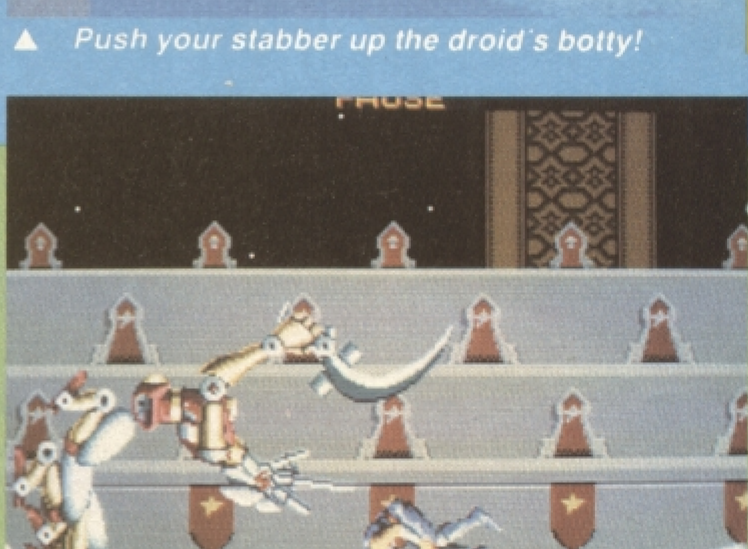
COMMENT

JULIAN

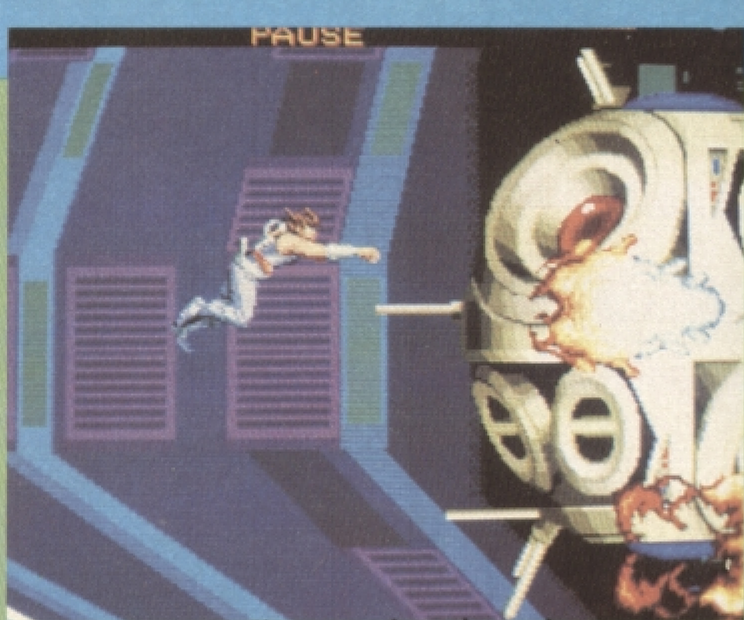
When this was loaded into the Megadrive, you could hear the sound of jaws dropping for miles around - it's an absolutely amazing, truly arcade perfect conversion. The graphics are stunning, with large, beautifully animated sprites and fantastic backdrops, and the sheer colour and variety is superb. The sound is also of a very high quality, with all the tunes and effects of the arcade machine! The game oozes playability, grabbing you as soon as you start playing, and keeping you at your Megadrive for hours on end. It's definitely one of the slickest conversions yet seen on the Megadrive - if you're the owner of an imported machine, make sure you get this now!

WATCH THE BADDIE

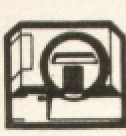
Strider doesn't just feature big end-of-level baddies. There are also big beginning-of-level baddies and big middle-of-level baddies too! Amongst the hazards to overcome are a giant robogorilla, a robocentipede, an enormous dinosaur and a troupe of killer ballet dancers. Weirdo city, man.



▲ *Hit the Politburo on the back of the head to kill it.*

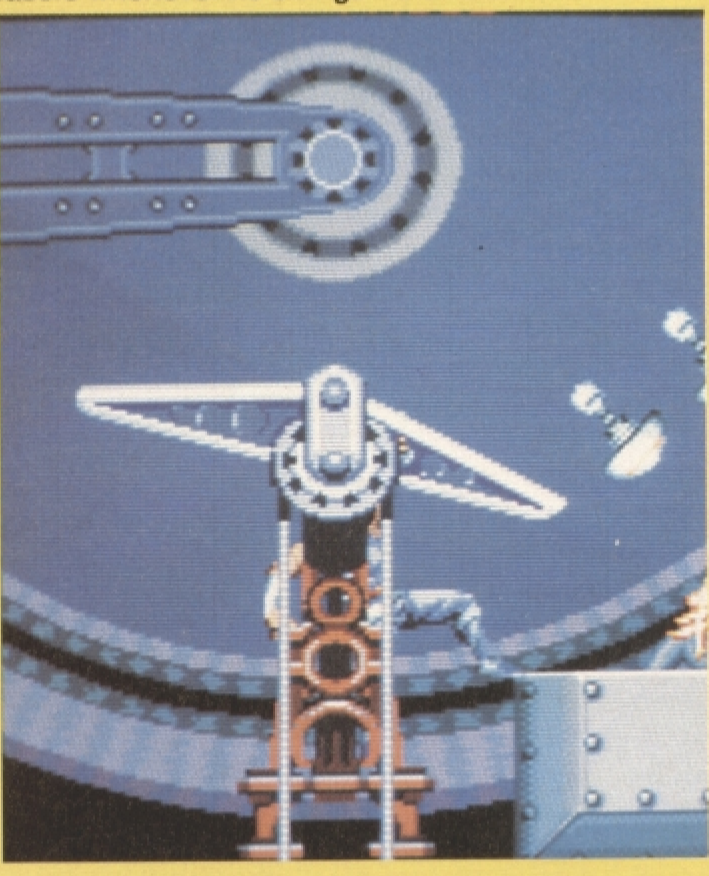


▲ *Time to get dizzy - and you're not even a blonde!*

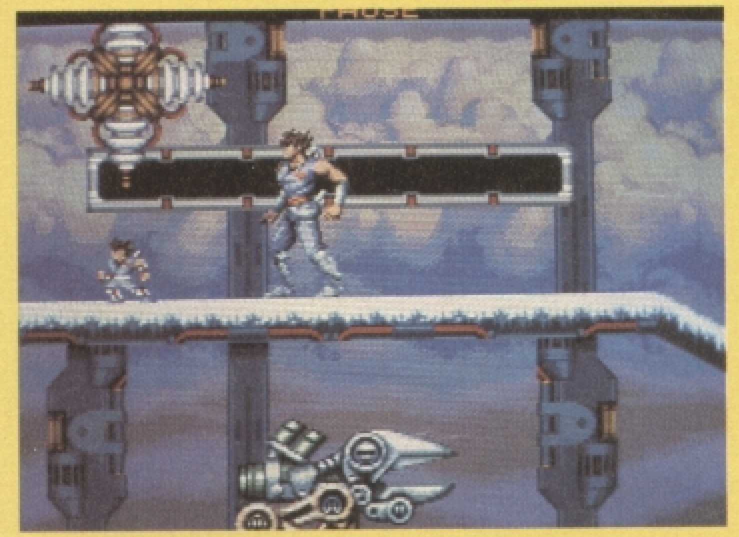



EXTRA WEAPONS

INVINCIBILITY: Makes Strider invincible for about 10 seconds.
BONUS POINTS: Makes your score grow.
ROBOPANTHER: A bit rubbish. Runs at baddies and blows them up.
ROBODRONE: These fly around Strider and fire lasers whenever he swings his sword.



EXTRA LIFE: Another life to prolong your game.



100 SHOT SUPER SWORD: Gives extended sword length for 100 swings.



ROBOBIRD: Flies around and kills any flying enemy.



EXTRA ENERGY: There are three of these, ranging from simple energy top up, to energy bar extend.



▲ *The end of level four. Stay on the branch to kill it quick.*

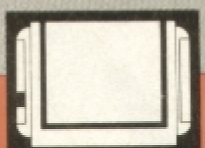
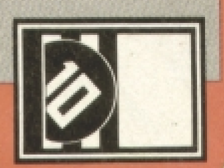
GREY IMPORT WARNING

At present Strider is only available from Megadrive software importers and is NOT officially available from Sega in this country. This means that the game will work fine on Megadrives that have been imported from Japan, but will not work on official UK Megadrives unless you have a Japanese games adaptor (available from mail order import companies) or your machine has been modified (which we do not recommend you do as this invalidates your warranty).



BY: SEGA
PRICE: £40.00
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 3-5
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: GREAT



PRESENTATION 86%
Skill level select, sound test and arcade-style presentation.

GRAPHICS 94%
Identical to the coin-op, with absolutely superb sprites and gorgeous parallax scrolling backdrops.

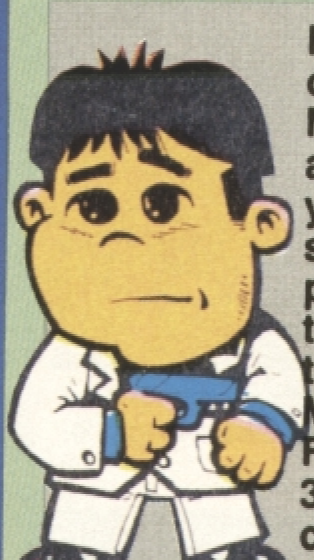
SOUND 89%
Again, identical to the coin-op. Great tunes and effects.

PLAYABILITY 94%
The manic slashing 'n' jumping action is amazingly addictive from the word go.

LASTABILITY 90%
As tough as the coin-op and there are three skill levels to test your mettle!

OVERALL 92%
An absolutely cracking conversion that's identical to the coin-op in every way. If you've got an imported Megadrive, this one's a must!





History is in the making. Yob has opened his very first MEAN MACHINES mailbag and has answered all the very best letters. If you've got something interesting to say, or have some wild 'n' wacky photos or drawings - or anything that'll make us laugh, why not send them into: MEAN YOB, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. There's £150.00 worth of console software on offer to the sender of the best letter of the month!

OI!!! I WANT YOUR LETTERS!

PRAISE BE!

Dear MEAN YOB,
Something astounding happened to me today: not only did I see a Lamborghini Countach but I also bought MEAN MACHINES number one. This is probably the best 100 pages since the page was invented.

I'll just mention the most eye-catching things like: the brilliant new marks system (it's so detailed it makes every other magazine look like People's Friend), the excellent art work by Gary (especially the brilliant piccies of Julian and Matt, the quantity of large screen shots, the in-depth previews and reviews, and the whoppa news sections.

How about MEAN MACHINES pens, posters, stickers, and binders?

Paul Tweedle, Merseyside

YOB: So you like the mag then? We'll be selling official MEAN MACHINES merchandising very soon indeed - keep your eye out...

BIG BALL FAN

The MEAN YOB!,
Great new mag! Loads of colour, comps, features, lengthy reviews, all brill!

I own an Amiga at the moment, but am looking forward to buying a Megadrive. The Amiga is good, but the Megadrive blows it away with games like Revenge Of Shinobi, Golden Axe, and Ghouls 'N Ghosts.

I like Kick Off 2 on the Amiga, so has the Megadrive got footy game? Is it good? Is there one called World Championship Soccer?

I also have my Amiga fixed up to my stereo. Can I link up a Megadrive in the same way?

Lee Merrick, Wardsley

YOB: Yes indeedy. There is a game called World Championship soccer - but it's only available on Japanese import, old chum, and it's nowhere near as good as Kick Off II. I certainly wouldn't bust my buns to get it. You need a jack plug to go into the headphone socket on the Megadrive, split into whatever leads you need to go into your stereo to make loud 'n' groovy sounds. However, if you blow up your stereo, it's not my fault at all.

MEGADRIVE KNOB FIDDLE

Dear MEAN YOB,
I am a poor, sad and tortured Megadrive. This thing you call a human tortures me every day. It forces me to swallow a large blob of plastic, electrocutes me, fiddles with my knobs. Then, if that wasn't bad enough, it reaches down my throat and expects me to throw up the plastic thing. Just to make life worse if I refuse to swallow the plastic thing it brutally tears off my clothes and tampers with my parts. Please help me.

A Megadrive (Euan Gutteridge, Hampton, Middlesex)

YOB: If anyone tries to fiddle with your intimate parts again, just send an electric current up through their joystick - that'll teach 'em.

I WANT A MAN TO RESCUE

Dear MEAN YOB!
Hi! As one of Britain's few female Megadrive owners, I thought I would drop you a line and give my views on the new magazine and other things.

Firstly I would like to say that MEAN MACHINES is good, I really enjoyed it, and I think it has a lot of promise. I thought that the news from America and Japan was good and I look forward to further issues. The review section is another welcome change as I felt that some of the reviews in C+VG were a little over-enthusiastic and not critical enough. Without a doubt the Megadrive is a brilliant

console, but I do feel that some of the games are just a little too easy, and in the past you didn't give an indication of the game's difficulty - it's good to see you do now.
Speaking of Megadrive games, how about telling Sega to have a few more with good female characters included in the options? I mean a lot of Megadrive games only female characters are needing to be rescued by the man, or are just standing there looking pretty, which as a female doesn't really make sense if you are the player!
Phelios was a good idea but I don't think it was a particularly original or exciting game.
As you can imagine by all this, Golden Axe is definitely my favourite Megadrive game at the moment.
One of my friends said they may be releasing Alien Storm on the Megadrive, Do you know anything about this (as it has a good female character in it)?
Well, that's it for now, keep up the good work.
Lydia, Nottingham
YOB: I can understand your point. The Japanese seem to be making more of an effort to allow the player to choose either a male or female character in many new arcade and console games. But unfortunately, until the world begins to wake up to the fact that the amount of female gamesplayers is increasing, you'll just have to grit your teeth, put on a pair of Y-fronts and rescue damsels in distress.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS IMPRESS

Dear MEAN YOB!,
I have just read the first issue of MEAN MACHINES and I'd like to say how heartily impressed I am. I bought a Megadrive a week or two back having eagerly awaited its release in this country, and all the computer games magazines have always shoved consoles in to a little subsection near the back, C+VG being the only real exception.
I thought that for real console information I would have to resort to "S" magazine, until magnificent MEAN MACHINES came my way. And what a magnificent specimen of magazinehood it is. I really am impressed and shall be placing a regular order forthwith.
However, as I read Issue One, I noticed a few things that puzzled me, then annoyed me. The things were:
1: On the front cover, the piccy of the Megadrive looked different to mine;
2: On the Revenge Of Shinobi review, on the release box the title screen said Super Shinobi;
3: In the release box, there is a cartridge outline; that's not what a Megadrive cartridge looks like;
4: In your Ghouls 'n' Ghosts review, you referred to the second end of level nasty as Cerberus. In my version he is called Infernomo.
5: A dead giveaway: the Super Monaco GP preview showed the game in Japanese.
Richard Kershaw, Leicester
YOB: 1: Surely not? 2: That's because Oz the wonder man used a Japanese picture by mistake - that's what it's called in the Land of the Rising Sun. 3: We had to take a bit of artistic license otherwise it'd look too much like a Sega Master System cartridge. 4: A slip of the word processor - but nothing a bit of tippex will correct. 5: That's 'cos the game was Japanese - what do you expect it to be in? Swahili?

MEAN MACHINE RAP

MEAN MACHINES has mass reviews
And a dwarf-like thing called Yob!
The strange thing is, in all his pics
He doesn't have a closed gob.

MEAN MACHINES is one cool mag
With every console known to man
So rush down to the newsagent's
And give an ish a scan.

There's news and reviews and compos too
And there are screenshots aplenty
It definitely gets my vote
For best mag of the century!
Kris Jenkins, Aylesbury
YOB! Here's my poem:

**Your rap
Woz crap.**

WHERE ARE THE GAMEBOY REVIEWS

Dear MEAN YOB!,
I eagerly awaited the first issue of the marvelous magazine MEAN MACHINES as I have two consoles, a Sega Master System, and I have just bought a Gameboy. I found plenty of Sega games reviewed but no Gameboy games reviewed. Will you do any Gameboy reviews? Also in your review of Double Dragon II you put down that there are no continues, but my friend got DD II from Hong Kong and on his version you can continue however many times you like.
Craig Yelland, London
YOB: Gameboy reviews? We've got 'em. Turn to page 84 once you've finished reading my page and feast your proverbials. The Japanese version of Double Dragon II features loads of continues, and that's what it sounds like your friend has got. We were assured that the UK version won't have loads of continues.

IT'S THE DEPTH

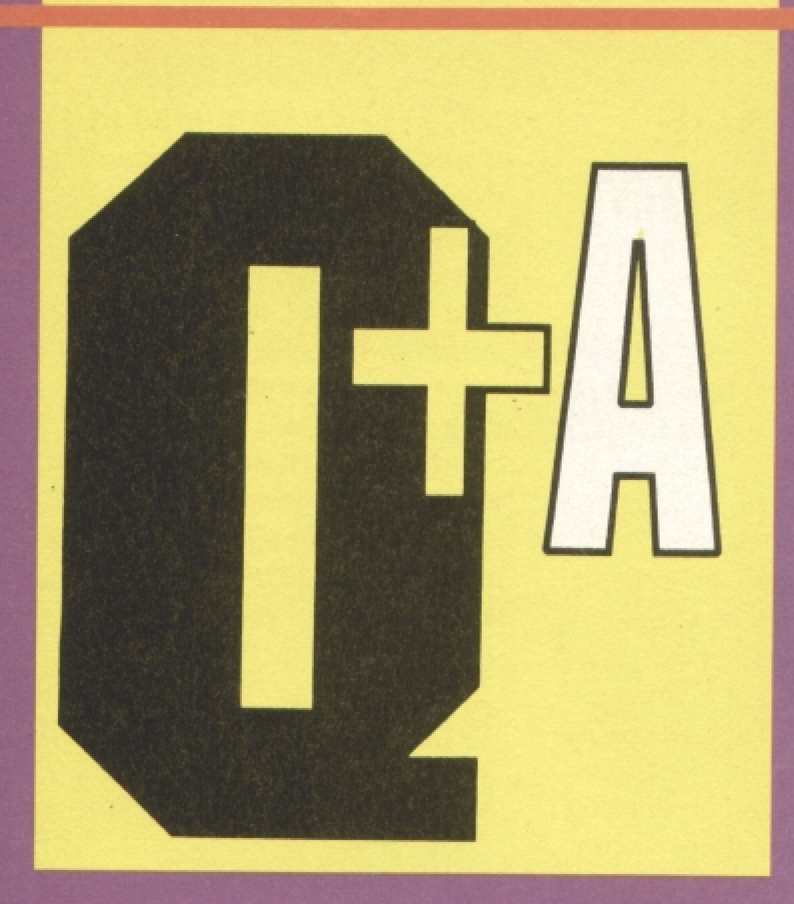
Dear MEAN YOB!
I would like to congratulate the C+VG gang on putting together MEAN MACHINES.
You put in a load of screen shots which is excellent, and I especially like the little icons and cartoon characters for Jaz and Matt, also the amount of information in the review is just right because you give loads of details about the game and good views from Jaz and Matt. You have got some great competitions (but I never enter any because I feel I would never win) and you also put in a lot of advertisements which is a good thing if readers are thinking of buying new machines - I'm saving hard for a Megadrive, but my brother wants a printer and an extra disk drive for our ST!
Please print my letter because I would be so grateful and generally I would like to say MEAN MACHINES is ace. Well done you guys and gals, keep up the good work!
Craig Pilkington, Bolton
YOB: That was the thinking behind MEAN MACHINES when it was first conceived - as much depth as humanly possible. Always enter competitions! If you don't enter, you'll never win! If do enter, there's a chance you might! As for a printer and extra disk drive for an ST? Tell your brother he's round the bend and that if he doesn't let you buy a Megadrive, I'll personally come round and polish my Doc Martens on his face.

SIARAD CYMRAEG?

Dear MEAN YOB!
I have three questions:
1. I have a Megadrive and am puzzled what the panel that comes off the back is for?
2. When is Roadblasters coming out for the Megadrive?
3. What does YOB! stand for or mean?
Stephen Dixon, Durham
YOB: Flipping cheek! Pester Jaz if you want a load of questions answered, not me! Just for that I'll pass you across to my welsh correspondent for the answers. 1: Coginio wy wedi ffrio, sosej a cig moch. 2: Wn i ddim. 3: YOB!

SPEAK PROPER

Dear YOB!
I've been waiting for a consoles-only magazine since I came out of nappies and when I heard about MEAN MACHINES I could hardly believe my ears. So I legged it down to my local WH Smith's and said, "Gimme MEAN MACHINES the most baddest all new consoles mag".
Stephen Fossey, Arnold, Notts
YOB: I'm surprised that the person behind the counter didn't give you a thick ear for not speaking properly. Next time you ask for the mag say, "Excuse me, good sir/madam. If you please, I would like to buy a copy of that fine monthly tome, MEAN MACHINES, the wonderful all-new consoles magazine."



Cor, you should have seen the size of my bulging sack this month - mail sack that is! You seem to be a pretty inquisitive bunch judging by the mound of questions you've sent in. Before we start, let's just get one thing straight. I'm not answering stupid questions like, "tell me every game that's coming out on the Megadrive", or "list every game on the Master System and how good you think they are". Make your questions reasonable please! If you've got a burning question you want the answer to, write to: JAZZA'S Q+A, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. If your questions are intelligent, I'll answer them...

SEGA TOTAL RECALL?

Dear Jaz,
Please could you tell me whether Total Recall is coming out on the Sega Master System?
James Smith, East Lothian, Scotland
JAZ: Sorry to disappoint old chum, but it isn't. A Nintendo version has just been released in the US, and should appear in this country early next year - by all accounts it's not the most stunning game in the world.

NINTENDO GOLDEN AXE

Dear Jaz,
Do you know whether Golden Axe is coming out on the Nintendo?
Adam Harvey, Cambridge
JAZ: I'm afraid you'll either have to buy a Megadrive, Sega or PC Engine or to play Golden Axe - there are no plans for a Nintendo version.

PEACE, MAN

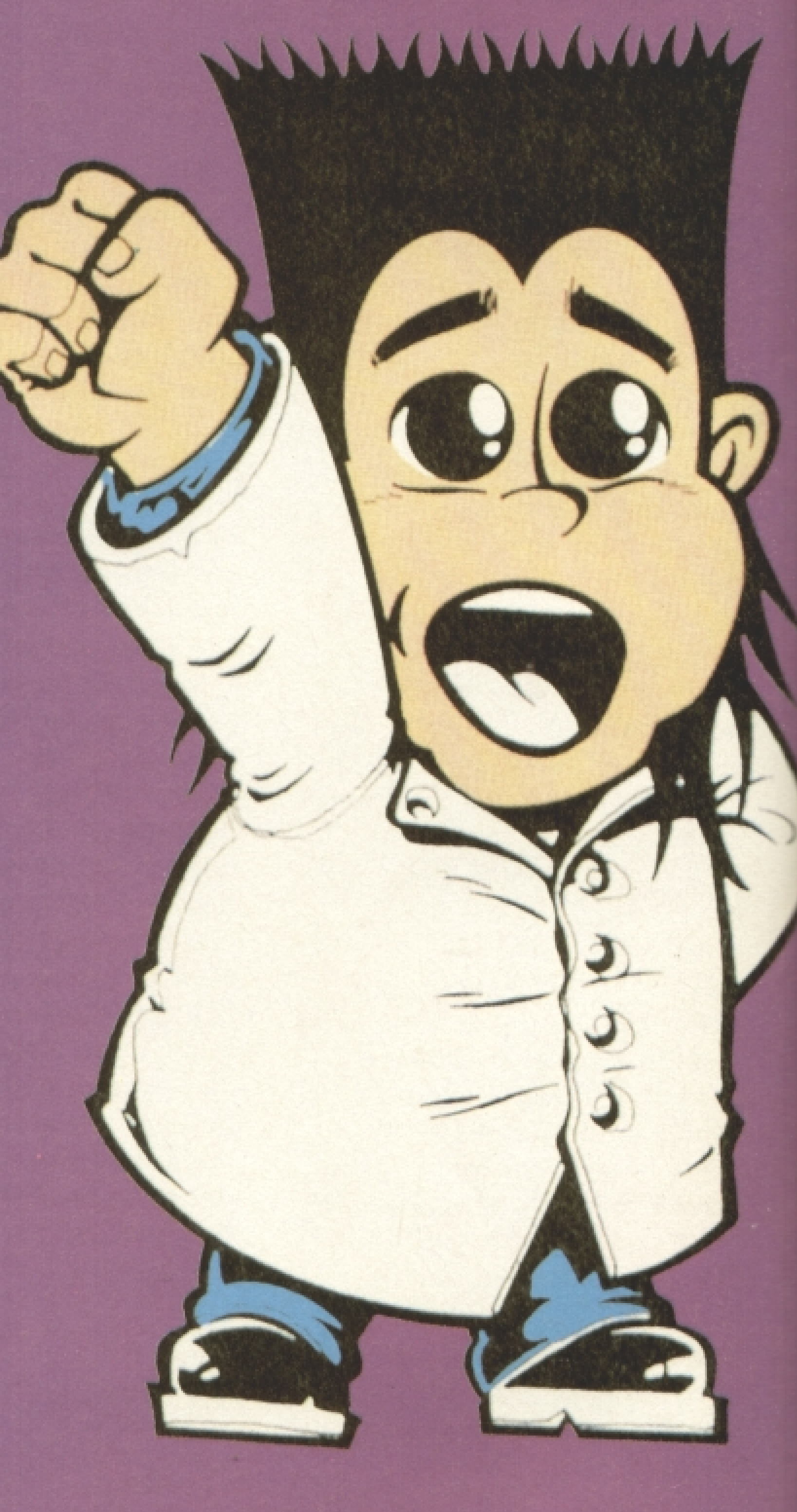
Dear Jaz,
Please could you answer this question sensibly. At the end of Psycho Fox on the Sega, it shows Psycho Fox clapping his hands. Then he stamps his feet and when he does, the word DO SUCOI comes down from the top of the screen. What does this mean? think it means peace, but my friends disagree.
Simon Marchington, Colchester, Essex
JAZ: I haven't got a clue. Perhaps it means, "oooh my bunions hurt", or "cheeky wombat juice"? Perhaps some of our Japanese readers can help us out?

CONSOLE BOOK IV

Dear Jazza,
Could you tell me whether there will be a Console Book IV? I would like to be the first to know all about it.
Stephen Calvey, Garston, Herts
JAZ: Yes, there will be - near the end of November for the bargain price of £2.95. It'll be completely amazing, with a full breakdown and details of every console known to man, plus there'll be reviews of EVERY console game available. Pretty amazing, huh? I'm afraid you won't be the first to know all about it, because now everybody does.

WHICH IS BEST

Dear Jaz,
I think MEAN MACHINES is the coolest mag in the World, so could you please answer these questions:
1. What is the best, a Megadrive or Super Famicom?
2. When will the Super Famicom be sold in the UK?
Martyn Cull, Douglas, Isle of Man
JAZ: First of all, the Super Famicom is technically superior to the Megadrive. But as we all know, it's the quality of the gameplay that counts, and as it stands we've yet to play any Super Famicom games. Nintendo have no plans to officially release the Super Famicom in the UK, but you'll be able to buy it from grey importers at the end of November - expect to pay around £190.00 or so.



MORE GAMES DATES

Dear Jaz,
I've got a few questions for you to answer:
1. Do you know when Final Fight is getting released on the Megadrive.
2. Is Psygnosis planning to make games for the Megadrive?
3. Is Splatterhouse coming out for the Megadrive, and when is Thunderforce IV released?
Harmeet Jandu, Glasgow
JAZ: Final Fight won't be available until later on next year, so you'll just have to be patient. I know that an improved version of Shadow of the Beast will appear on the Megadrive sometime next year - but whether Psygnosis themselves are programming the game is another thing entirely. Thunderforce IV is scheduled for a May 1991 release in Japan, and Splatterhouse, as far as I know, won't appear on the Megadrive.

I SAY SEEGA, YOU SAY SAYGA

Dear Jaz,
My friend and I have been arguing about the pronunciation of Sega. Is it SEEGA or SAYGA? By the way, what do your special clever trousers look like?
Mike Bowden, South Woodford, London
JAZ: It's pronounced SAY-GA. So now you know. My special clever trousers are similar in design to my special shouting trousers, but they're a different colour.

I WANT ALIENS

Dear Jaz,
For Christmas I'm getting a Megadrive, and I'm wondering whether the arcade version of Aliens will be coming out on that machine?
Max Herrick, Billesdon, Leics
JAZ: You'll be pleased to hear that a Megadrive version of Aliens is in the pipeline, but I don't think it'll appear until the middle of next year. Keep watching MEAN MACHINES for a further update.

CAN I USE US GAMES?

Dear Jaz,
I own a Mattel version of the Nintendo, and I'm wondering if I can use American games on it. And if not is there an American game adaptor that I can buy?
Chris Brindle
JAZ: No, you can't use American games. American adaptors are available for the Nintendo, but they're very difficult to come by. The best bet is to scan the black and white adverts in this mag to see if you can find a company that sells them.

SCART OR PAL OR WHAT

JAZ: I've had about a million letters asking about the difference between SCART and PAL grey imported Megadrives. The difference is quite simple. PAL versions work on a normal UK television set, and SCART versions only work on a monitor with a SCART or Euroconnector socket. However, if you buy an official UK Megadrive, it will work on both a normal TV and a monitor and will have a proper warranty too!

WOBBLY SEGA

Dear Jaz,
Approximately two months ago I bought a Sega Master System from a mail order catalogue and was very impressed with its performance. However, recently the free built-in game has started to malfunction. The game is still playable, but the bikes now move very slowly, making play very sluggish. All the other cartridge games work fine. Could this be some sort of a computer virus, or is my machine faulty.
John Hitchcock, London E11
JAZ: I'm glad to say that consoles can't catch computer viruses. Your Sega sounds faulty to me. The best thing to do is send it back to the catalogue and demand a new one - after all, it's still under guarantee.

FORGOTTEN WOBBLES

Dear Jaz,
I'm writing concerning Forgotten Worlds on the Megadrive. The problem is that when a one-player game begins, the player's energy level drops to almost zero for no apparent reason, and it's game over after the first enemy hit. However, this doesn't happen if you select autofire on the option screen. Is this a bug?
Peter York, Bilston, W Mids
JAZ: Weirdo city, man. Sounds like your copy of Forgotten Worlds has caught a bug of the Programus Cokupus variety. Take it back and get a new one. If the guarantee has run out, just use the autofire option. To be honest, I never play the game without autofire anyway...

WOT TV?

Dear Jaz,
What TV would you recommend for the Megadrive, and what inch?
Wai-Wah Cheung, Leicester
JAZ: I feel tempted to do the old "it's not the size that counts" routine. All TV's work with the Megadrive - obviously if it's a crap TV, the picture won't be much cop. If you're buying a new TV, just use your intelligence and pick one with a flat screen and a sharp picture.

WHICH NEW GAMES?

Dear Jaz,
My Mum and Dad have agreed to get me a Megadrive along with three games to start off my collection. In your opinion, what would be the best choice of games? I prefer platform games and beat 'em ups to shoot 'em ups.
Christopher Wylie, Perth, Scotland
JAZ: The reason why MEAN MACHINES exists is to help you choose your games. Look at the reviews, see which games you fancy, and then go and test them out to see if they're the ones you really want. After all, my taste of games might be different to yours. But if you really want to know, I'd go for Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, Revenge of Shinobi and Golden Axe.

IS ALTERED BEAST GOOD?

Dear Jaz,
I'm getting a Sega Master System for Christmas and can have one game for it. I'm considering getting Altered Beast. Please can you tell me whether it's any good or not. And could you please tell me when Super Monaco GP is coming out.
Mark Nicholson, Cockermouth, Cumbria
JAZ: Altered Beast isn't much cop, really. If I could only have one game for my Sega, it would be either California Games or Wonderboy III. Check out the reviews and see what you think. Master System Super Monaco GP will be out early next month - so start saving your pennies.

WHEN AND WHERE

Dear Jaz,
How long will it be before Super Monaco GP, Thunderforce III and many more brilliant titles come out officially?
Patrick Wakeham, Exeter, Devon
JAZ: That's a tricky one, Patrick. Virgin Games, official Sega distributors are currently lining up a pretty hot release schedule of official Megadrive games, but at the time of going to press there are few firm details. I should think that the games you mention will appear very early next year - but I'm afraid you'll just have to keep reading MEAN MACHINES for further details.



SPACE HARRIER II

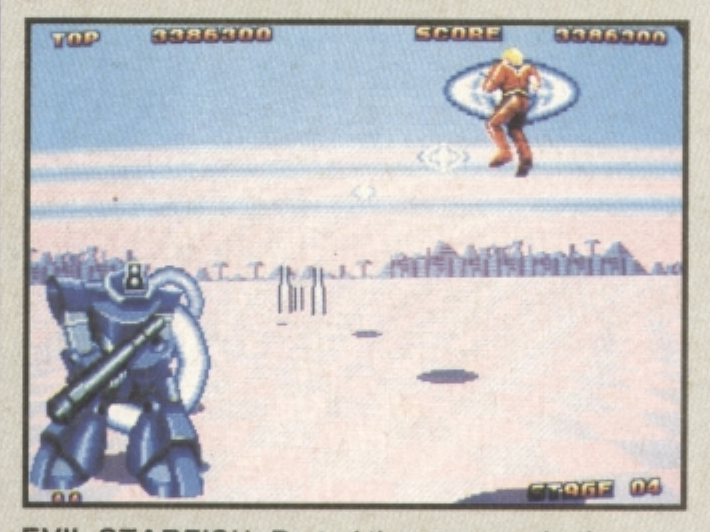
THE WELCOMING COMMITTEE

All the foes in the game are mutated into bizarre forms. Here's a selection:

DEMON TOAD: Ever so pretty, leaps up and attacks



CYBORGMAN: Sneaks up behind you and shoots your rear.



EVIL STARFISH: Part of the scenery that's impossible to destroy.



MECA ADENCE: A giant sea anemone that attacks on the first level.



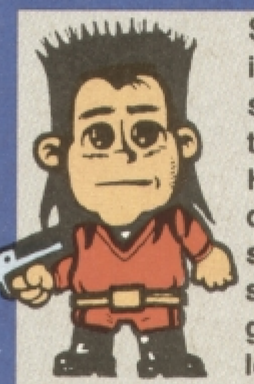
It's the far future - the year 6236 to be exact - and the beautifully-named 214th Sector is under attack from hordes of alien creepies. Being the sort of guy that revels in a little alienocide, you grab a jet pack and the latest death-dealing mega laser and transport yourself to the area via your Cosmic Gate to see if you can gently persuade them to go away.

Like the original game, Space Harrier II is a 3D shoot 'em up in which you fly into the screen, blasting the baddies that fly towards you. There are twelve levels to clear of baddies, and any one of these may be selected at the start of the game.

Once you've made your selection, it's blasting time. The baddies instantly start to attack, and much dodging and blasting is required to survive. Just to make life even more difficult, obstacles bar your way - trees, columns, pipes, and even starfish on sticks! The result of crashing into one of these weird hazards is a lost life.

The end of each level is patrolled by an exotic guardian, including such delights as Medusa's head, a giant jellyfish and a three-headed turtle (not the Hero variety), and these are destroyed to progress to the next level.

COMMENT



JULIAN

Space Harrier II is certainly an impressive game to look at - the sheer speed and smoothness of the 3D graphics is quite stunning. However, its beauty is only skin deep. The game itself is very simple indeed, and once you've seen all the different background graphics (and you can select any level at the start of the game) there's very little to keep you coming back. There are many people out there who love Space Harrier and are bound to go bonkers over this - but if you like your games to be more than just a pretty face, give this a miss.



Choose a level from here.



Heads up!







▲ Green faces zoom out of the sky!



▲ Baggy clothes with a hood... he must be an acid raver!

▼ The wings don't move, the legs don't move - it just hovers there trying to kill you.



▼ Bullets get larger as they approach, so keep dodging.



▼ Pink cloud monsters are tougher than they look.



▲ Old-age enormous mutant tortoises!

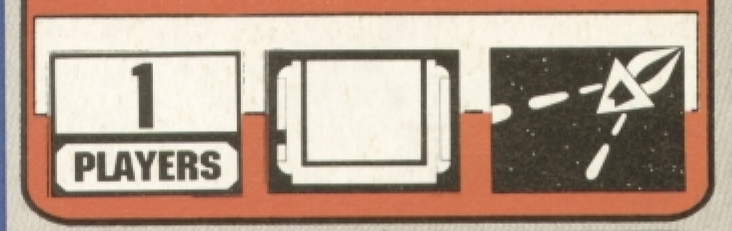
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Twelve levels have to be cleared in order to complete the game. Each has its own distinct landscape and unique obstacles and aliens to blast and avoid. After five levels there's a bonus stage in which the hero jumps aboard a flying saucer where extra points can be gathered by blasting trees. During this period it's impossible to die, so keep blasting those trees and rack up the points!

COMMENT

MATT

Space Harrier was a sensation in the arcades because of its speed and sit-down cabinets. However its playability never really matched its looks and sound, and I'm afraid that's true of this game as well. Don't get me wrong, it's fast and furious and great fun, but lacks a variety of gameplay to make it a total winner. The aliens are brilliant, with the difficulty level pitched just right. Still, well worth a gander if fast shoot 'em ups are your thing.



PRESENTATION 83%

Sound test, skill levels and level select - pretty good, really.

GRAPHICS 90%

Very impressive indeed, with colourful sprites and very smooth and fast 3D update.

SOUND 85%

Booming effects and music that fits well.

PLAYABILITY 81%

Seems tough at first, but once you've got used to the speed, the action is very straightforward.

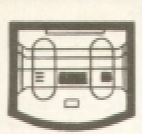
LASTABILITY 69%

Once you've got over the novelty of the graphics, the simplistic gameplay doesn't take long to master.

OVERALL 77%

A slick and polished game that looks amazing, but is rather dull to play.



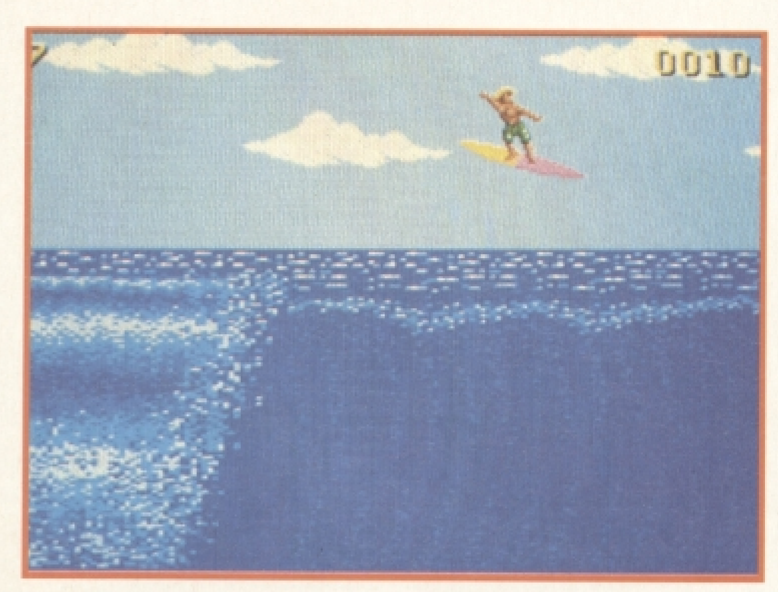


EPYX WORLD GAMES

The first sports simulation to appear on the GX4000 is a four-event affair featuring BMX riding, surfing, cliff diving and downhill slalom.

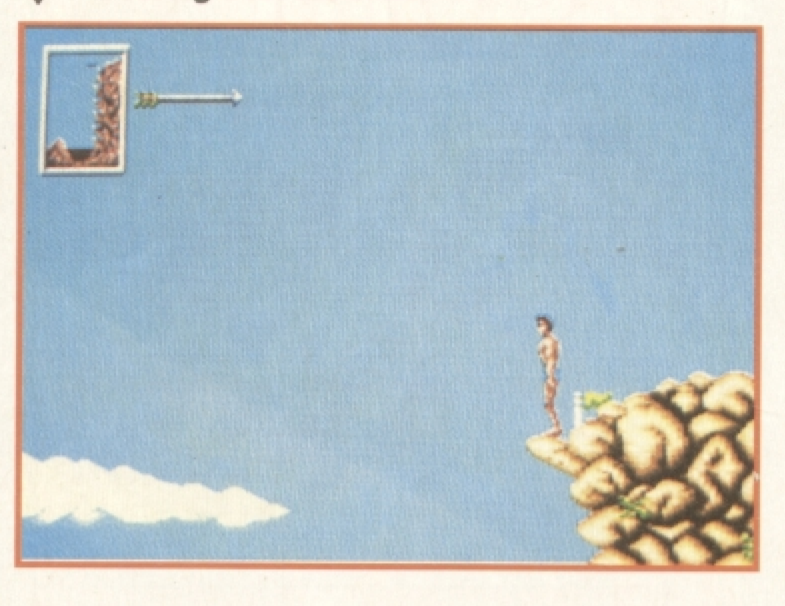
Up to four people can play at once, in a sort of micro-Olympic quartathlon. Each player attempts an event, and the highest scorer wins the gold, the second highest the silver and so on. At the end of the competition the person with the most medals is the winner!

If you're on your own, there's a practice option so that you can play an event over and over again until you're completely unbeatable, and there are also record tables where all your greatest attempts are displayed for you gloat over.



▲ *Going for the elusive 360 on the surfboard.*

▼ *Peering over the chasm before the dive.*



▼ *Make sure you straighten out before you land!*



▲ *The beginning of the ski slalom.*

WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

The events in Epyx World of Games have all been culled from the Epyx Games series, which have appeared on various computer systems over the last six years. Cliff diving appeared in World Games, BMX and surfing graced the superb California Games and slalom skiing featured in Winter Games. So now you know.

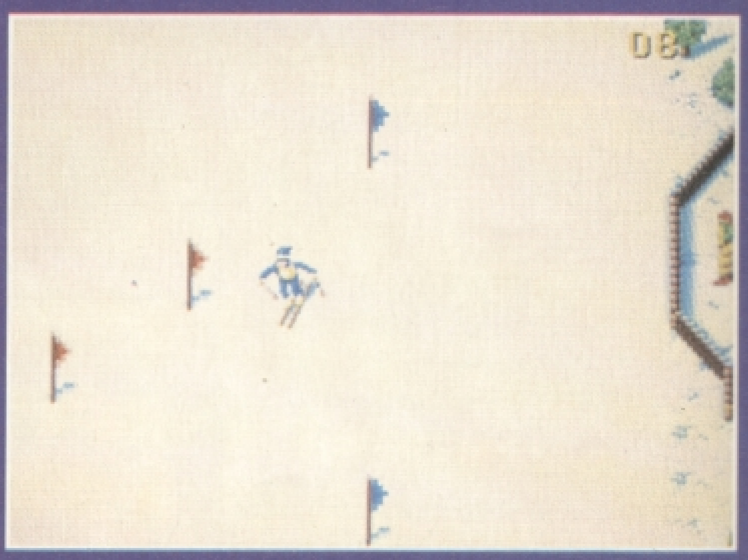


THE GAMES



BMX

Hop onto a BMX and ride down the very hilly course attempting to do as many stunts as possible for bonus points. It's played against the clock, and the quickest time from start to finish wins the race.



SLALOM SKIING

Ski down a slope as fast as you can, making sure that you go through the pairs of flags. Points are deducted for missing them - just make sure you get to the bottom in the fastest time with as few faults as possible.

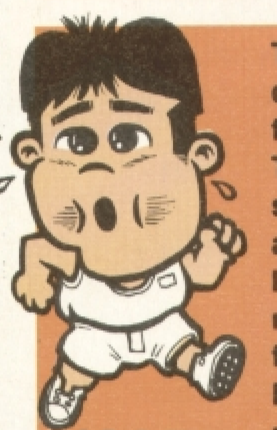
LD OF
ES

SURFING
Take to the beaches of California, ride the waves and do as many stunts as you can for mega-points within the time limit. You're only allowed three wipe-outs (falling off your board to you and me) - so be careful out there.



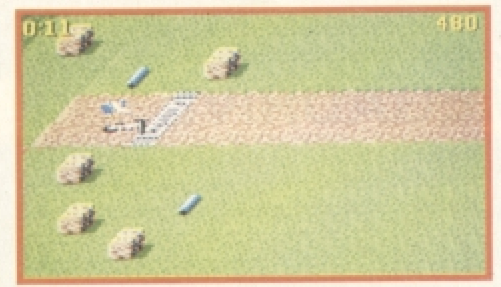
CLIFF DIVING
This is the slightly mad sport of slinging yourself off a rocky perch to dive into the rather shallow water below. Points are scored for the perfection of the dive. A perfect 10 is a guaranteed winner - and nearly impossible!

COMMENT



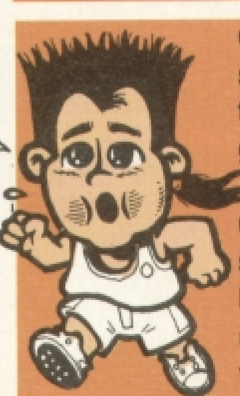
MATT

This is a disappointment from the start. The loading screen is dull and lifeless, and I'm afraid the rest of the game follows suit. The BMX is monotonous, the skiing is too easy, the surfing is poorly animated and the cliff diving - well, the diving is quite fun and is certainly different (I love smashing my head all over the rocks!). The main problem is the lack of events: only four in a console game is taking the Mick a little, I feel. Perhaps the game would be improved by a proper medal-giving ceremony, but I doubt if this would really help. An average game that I can't honestly recommend.



Leap your through the BMX event.

COMMENT



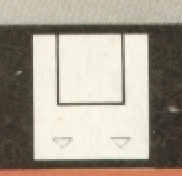
JULIAN

On the positive side, this features some great sprites and excellent, ultra-smooth scrolling backdrops which really show what the GX4000 can really do. However, on the negative side, there are only four events and they're not particularly challenging. It only takes a session or two before you get near perfect scores, and therefore any sense of real achievement is minimised. If Epyx World of Games had a few more events, I would heartily recommend it. But as it stands there's simply not enough to keep you entertained for very long.

EPYX WORLD OF GAMES

BY: EPYX
PRICE: £24.99
RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: VERY EASY
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD







PRESENTATION 85%
A whole load of excellent options allowing up to four players to practice and compete.

GRAPHICS 84%
Detailed and nicely animated sprites and great backdrops, particularly the skiing.

SOUND 69%
Rather weak effects, and even weaker tunes.

PLAYABILITY 63%
Very easy, in fact too easy to get into.

LASTABILITY 45%
Only four easy events to keep you occupied - you won't be playing this for very long.

OVERALL 59%
Had loads of potential, but unfortunately this package leaves you wanting a lot more.

TOP 10 CHARTS



		MEGADRIVE
1	◀	GOLDEN AXE
2	▼	REVENGE SHINOBI
3	▲	TRUXTON
4	NE	ALEX KIDD
5	◀	FORGOT'N WORLDS
6	▲	THUNDERBLADE
7	▲	SPACE HARRIER II
8	▼	SUPER HANG-ON
9	▼	RAMBO III
10	NE	MYSTIC DEF'DER



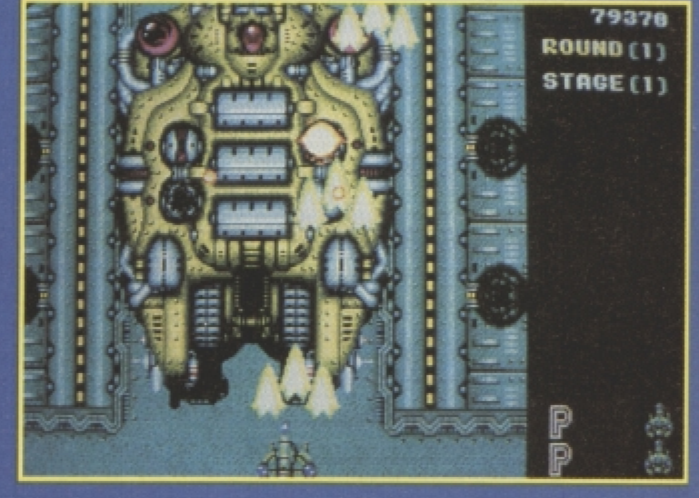
▲ *Axe burns away the competition to remain at the top.*



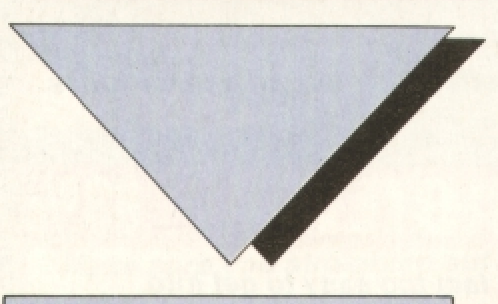
▲ *Can Shinobi chop its way to number one next month?*

MEGADRIVE

Golden axe reigns supreme for another month, and the excellent Shinobi dogs its footsteps. Truxton, the lovable, faithful shoot 'em up, shoots up to third. Somehow, the rather poor Alex Kidd has crept in to the top four, oddly ahead of the wonderful Forgotten Worlds. Thunder Blade has managed to improve its position by some miracle. What's happened to Ghouls 'n' Ghosts?



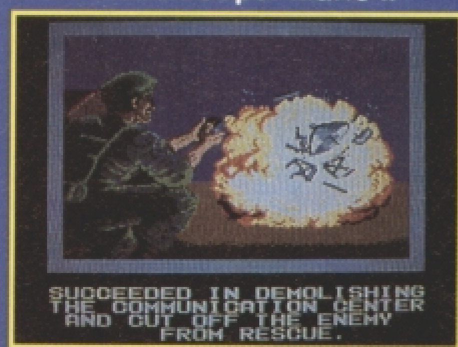
▲ *The rather good Truxton zooms up the charts to number three.*



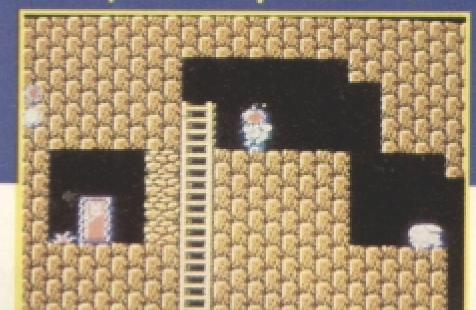
ALL FORMATS

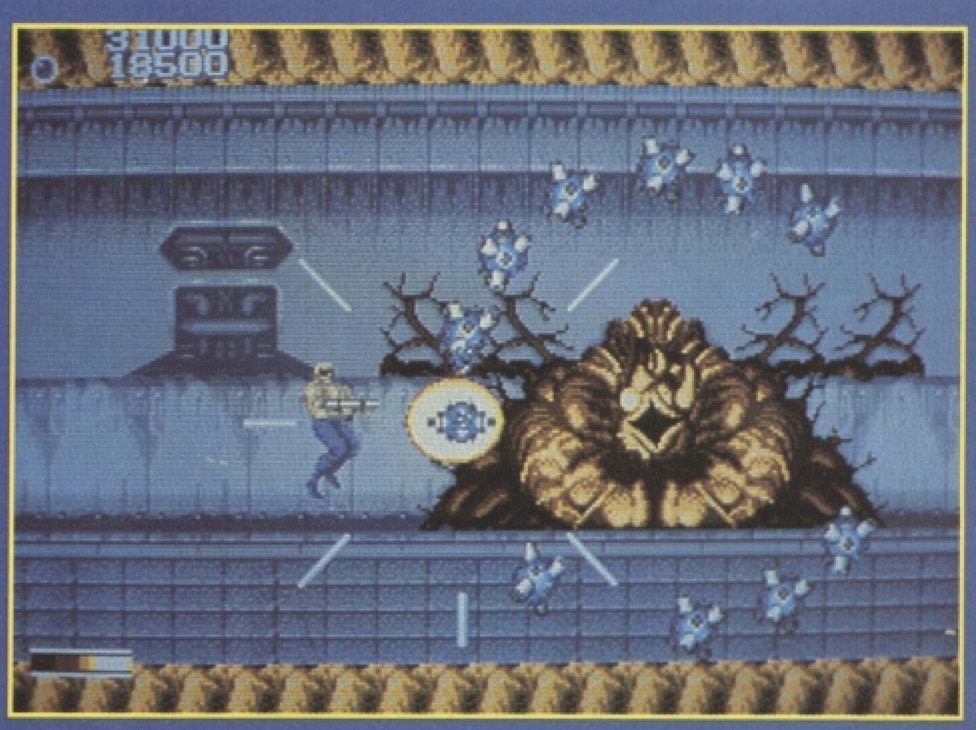
PREDICTIONS

SEGA: Operation Wolf
MEGADRIVE: Forgotten Worlds
NINTENDO: Super Mario II

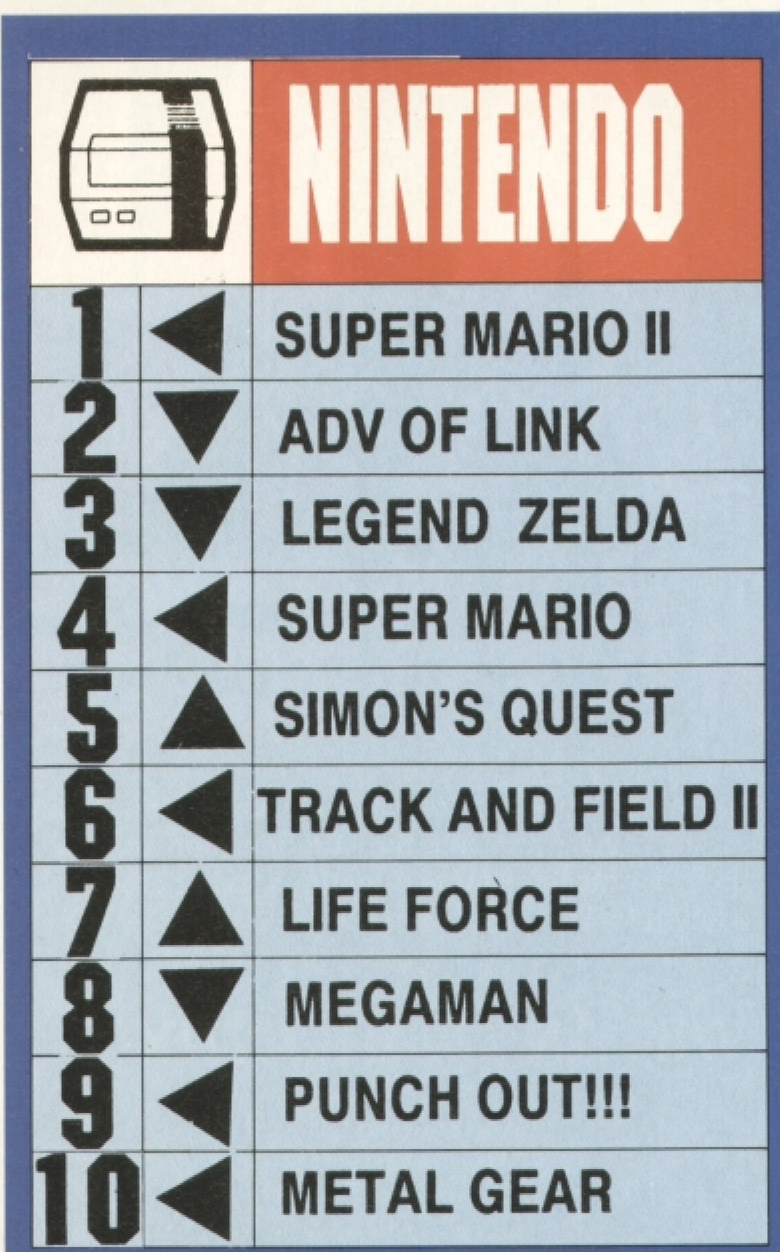


▲ *Op Wolf - top next time?*





▲ *Forgotten Worlds is bound to get higher - but how high?*



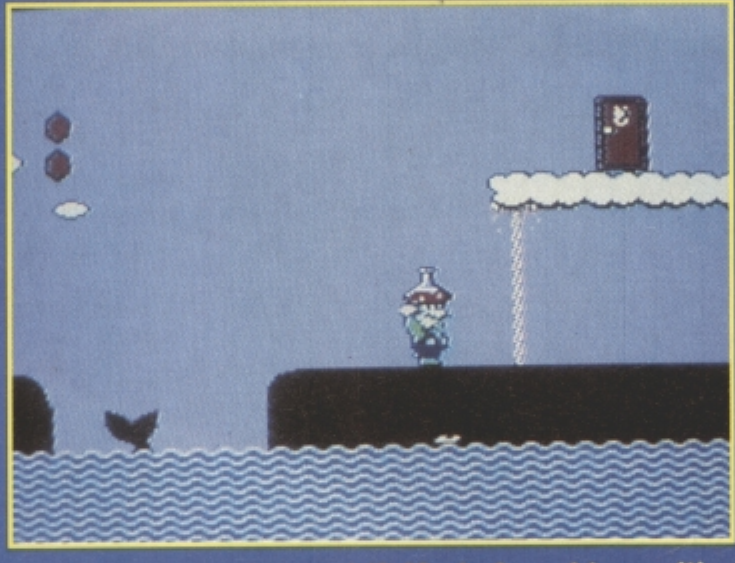
		NINTENDO
1	◀	SUPER MARIO II
2	▼	ADV OF LINK
3	▼	LEGEND ZELDA
4	◀	SUPER MARIO
5	▲	SIMON'S QUEST
6	◀	TRACK AND FIELD II
7	▲	LIFE FORCE
8	▼	MEGAMAN
9	◀	PUNCH OUT!!!
10	◀	METAL GEAR

NINTENDO

Rather a dull chart this month, with minor shufflings rather than any big chart leaping. Super Mario maintains his grip on the top slot, while the two Zelda games swap positions. Down the chart, more place-swapping is in evidence, with Track + Field II and Simon's Quest, and Life Force and Megaman playing musical chairs. All is static at the 9th and 10th spots.

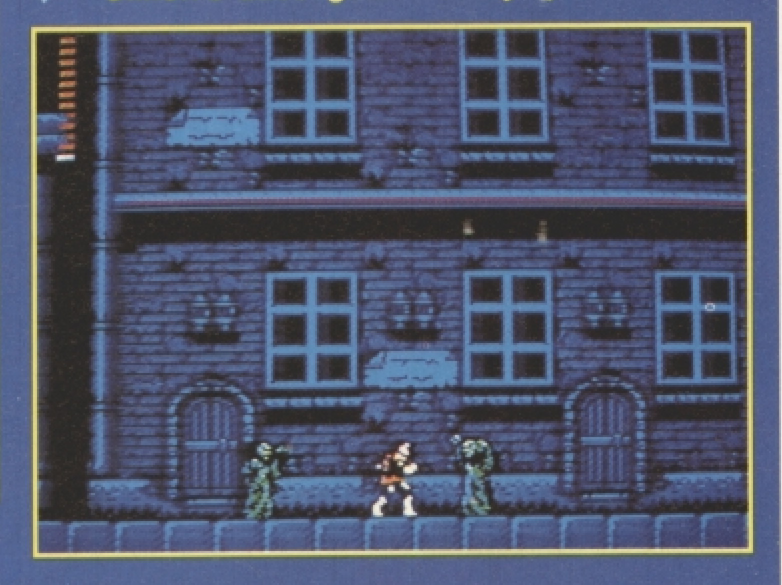


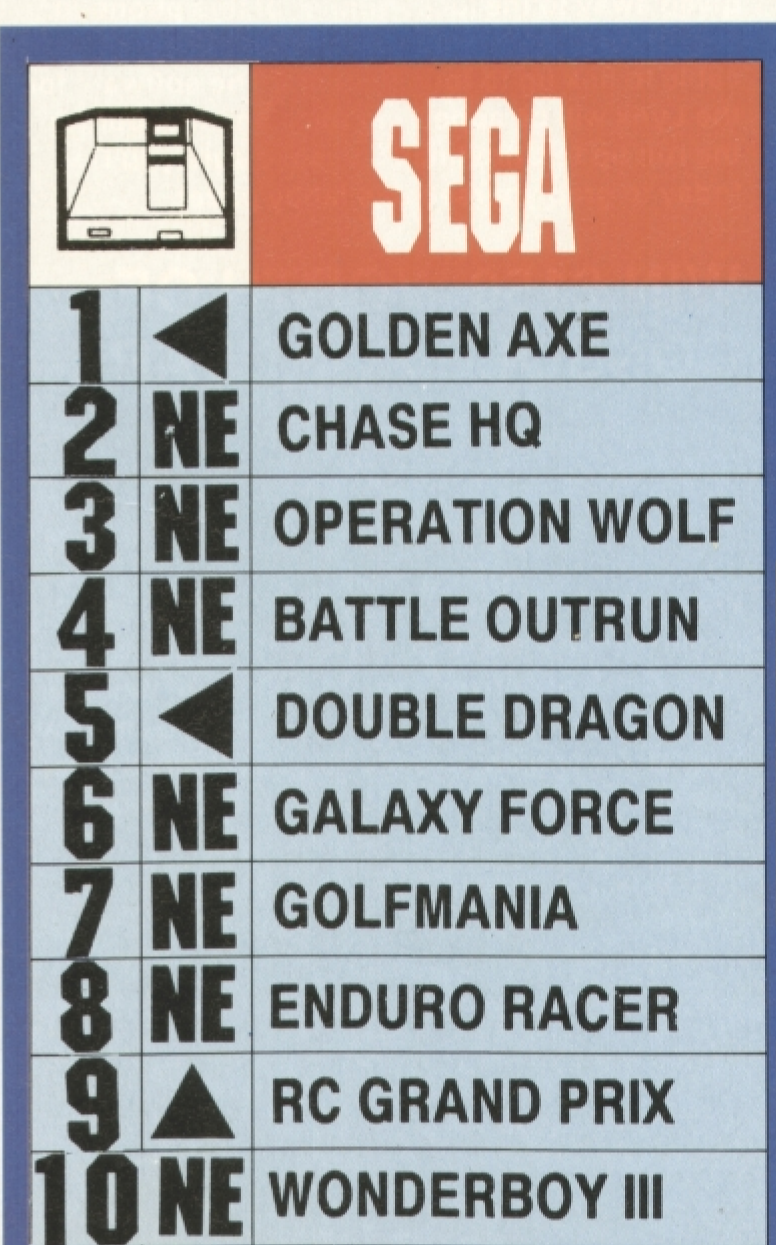
▲ *Life Force climbs to number seven.*



▲ *It will take a lot to shift Mario from his position.*

▼ *Simon's Quest gets half way up the chart.*

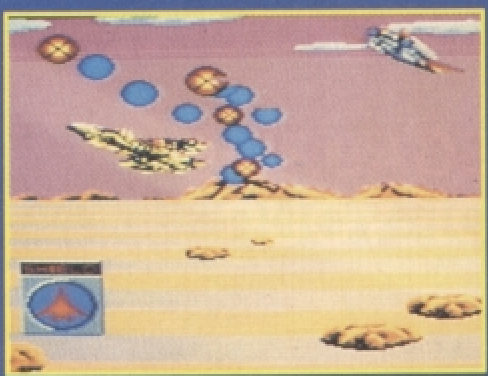




		SEGA
1	◀	GOLDEN AXE
2	NE	CHASE HQ
3	NE	OPERATION WOLF
4	NE	BATTLE OUTRUN
5	◀	DOUBLE DRAGON
6	NE	GALAXY FORCE
7	NE	GOLFMANIA
8	NE	ENDURO RACER
9	▲	RC GRAND PRIX
10	NE	WONDERBOY III

SEGA

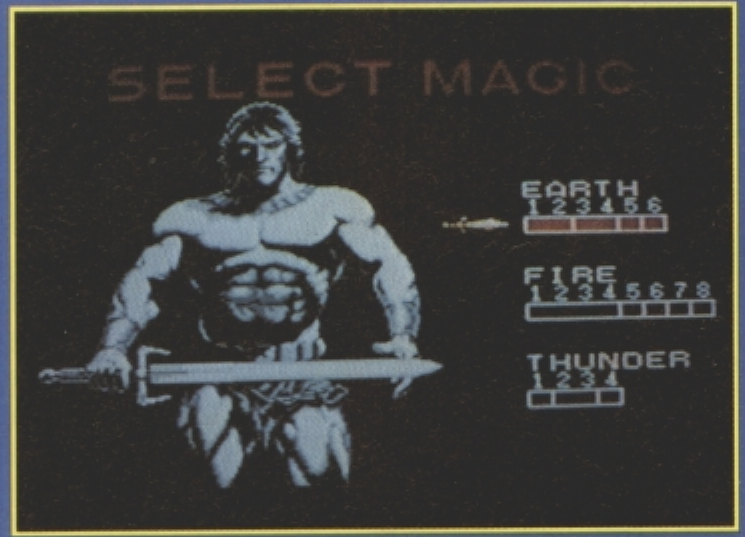
Unsurprisingly, Golden Axe retains the premiere position, although Operation Wolf may well oust it next month. A total of four driving games are in the chart, meaning that Sega owners are obviously closet Nigel Mansells. Wonderboy III is at the lowly number 10 slot - come on, it's brilliant!



▲ *A strong presence from Galaxy Force.*

▼ *Wonderboy III - yeah!*





▲ *Golden Axe - last month at number one?*

▼ *Enduro crosses the grid at number eight.*



HOTLINES

MEAN MACHINES

WIN A GAMEBOY

0839 121 174

The Gameboy has taken the world by storm, with over 11 million sold. Why? Because it's fabberooni! It has brilliant graphics, stereo sound, a video link (if you've got a friend) and is truly portable. Don't catch a bus without it! Nintendo have made a spiffy device, so don't hang about - ring today and see if you can win one!

WIN A MEGADRIVE

0839 121 180

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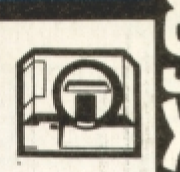
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USER FRIENDLY

It's tips time again, with yet another section bulging at the seams with the very hottest hints, tips and cheats on Nintendo, Sega and Megadrive. But don't forget, this section would be nothing without you! We need your tips, cheats and maps, and will award the sender of the month's best tips a stonking great £150.00 worth of console software for his machine!! Now that's an offer you surely can't afford to miss! The place to send your cheats and maps is: MEAN MACHINES TIPS, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. Don't forget - next month all that software could be yours...

ALTERED BEAST

On the title screen of this freebie game, press B and the START buttons to access the options screen where you can select the difficulty, start level and the kind of beast you want to play as.

LAST BATTLE

If you're having difficulty on this very easy and pretty rubbish beat 'em up, when you die you can restart on the same level by pressing A, B, C and START.

SUPER HANG-ON

S Allan has got a code which takes you right to the end of this super motorcycle racing game:

5FF3F546F35564
FFOSLPIMFJQNKS



TRUXTON

Aykat Hilui (the signature is a bit dodgy, so we think that's his name - always put your name in block capitals just in case we can't read your writing) of London N13 has a great cheat to get rid of the end-of-level guardians. Press B to create a skull smart bomb and instantly pause the game so that the skull is frozen in place. Leave the game for ten seconds or so, and when you restart the action the guardian will be completely decimated.



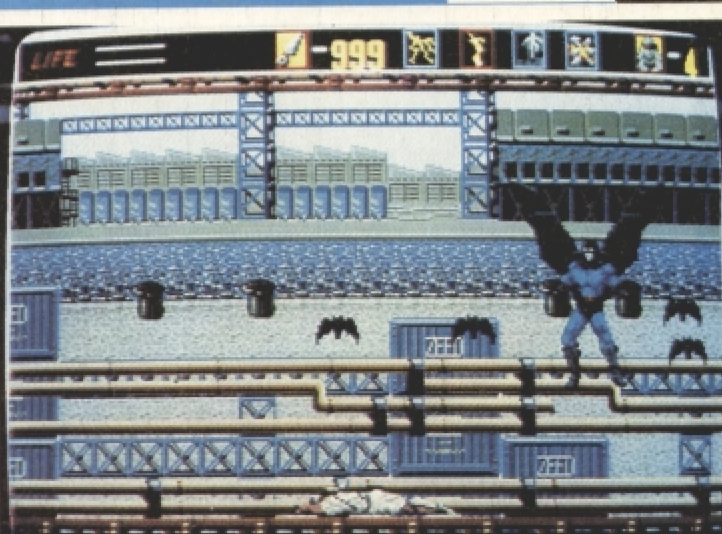
SPACE HARRIER II

When you start off in the space ship at the start of the game, press A, B and C together and move the joypad left or right to select a level.



THUNDERFORCE II

If you haven't found this yet, you're a bit of a spaz. Press button A and START on the title page to access the options screen.



SUPER SHINOBI

You might have noticed that in our screen shots in last month's review of this Mega Game, we were playing with 999 shurikens. How did we do it? Easy. Just go to the option screen and put the number of shurikens to zero. Keep on pressing the start button very fast for a while and an infinity sign (a lying down figure 8) will appear to replace the zero. When you start the game you'll have infinite surikens. And that makes life a little bit easier...



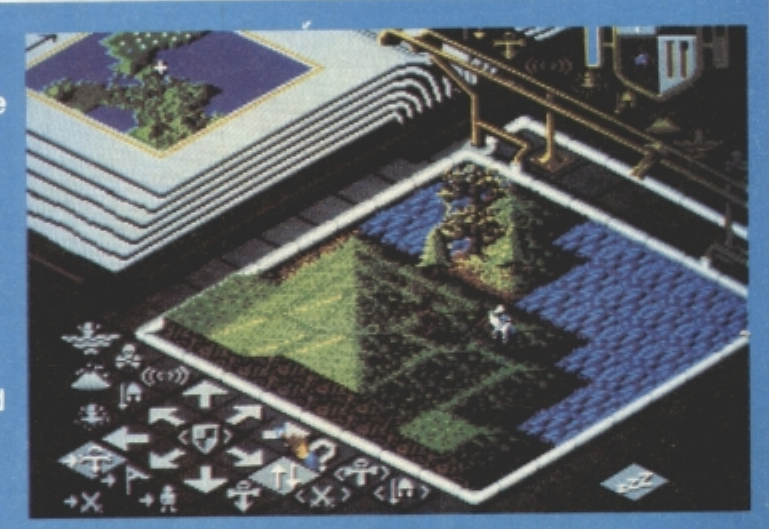
SUPER SHINOBI

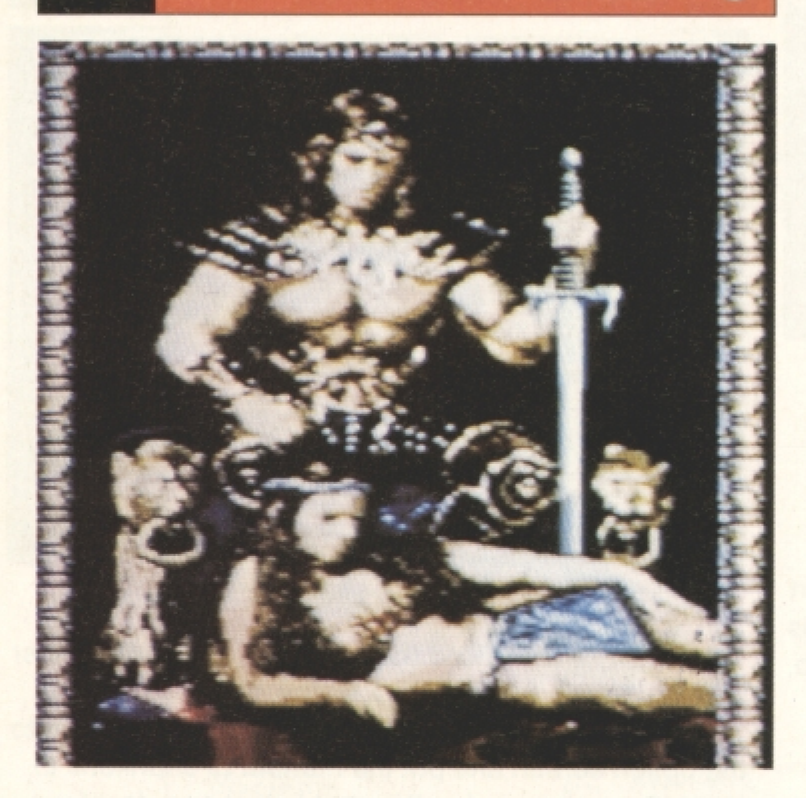
Want loads of extra lives? Here's how from the mysteriously named dudes, Dack and Zero of Birmingham.

On the factory scene, somersault off the first platform and spray your shurikens. This reveals an extra life icon. Collect it and you won't get one, but two (count 'em) extra lives. Die, and repeat the process to keep racking up loads and loads of extra lives, which should enable you to get all the way through the game!

POPULOUS

If you want to tackle some of the seemingly impossible higher levels, try out this cheat from USA's number one gamesplaying dude, Donn Nauert of American magazine, Computer Games and Video Entertainment. Select a new level, and when it asks you to put in a password, keep the B button pressed and you'll be able to enter numbers instead of letters. It's a bit of a trial and error thing - 1978 for example is level 394 (and what a rotten swine it is), but it's a good laugh and lets you see levels that you otherwise mightn't reach (does that sound like some kind of lager ad or what)!







GOLDEN AXE

Here's some useful help for wielders of very large choppers courtesy of Andrew Dunn. To start with choose the fire magic, as it kills more baddies.

To kill the club-swinging attackers, jump in the air and slash your sword downwards. Do this three times and they're dead meat.

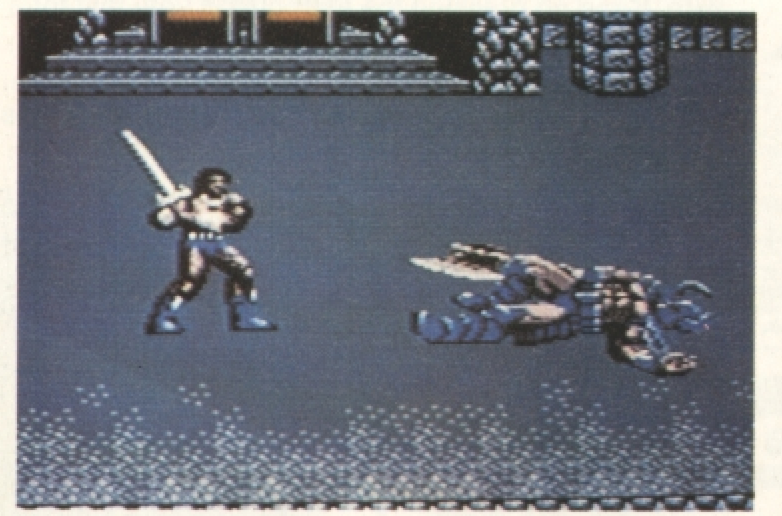
Do the same for the Amazonian Warriors, but take a run before jumping.

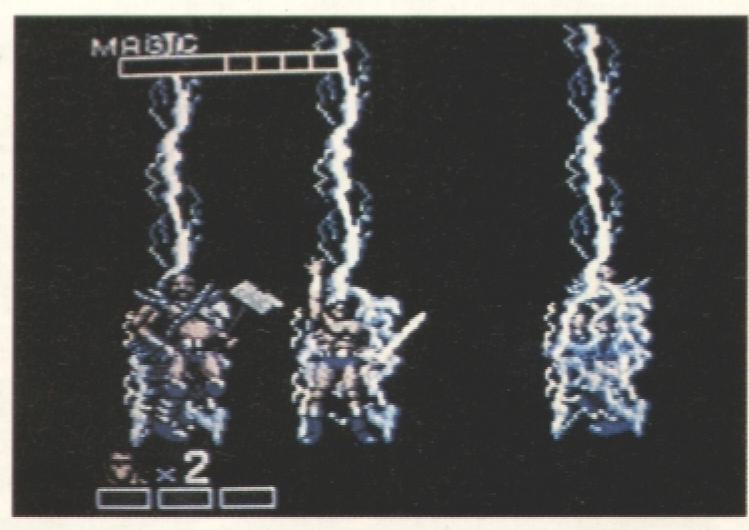
Do the same again for the hammering giants, but watch out for their shoulder charges.

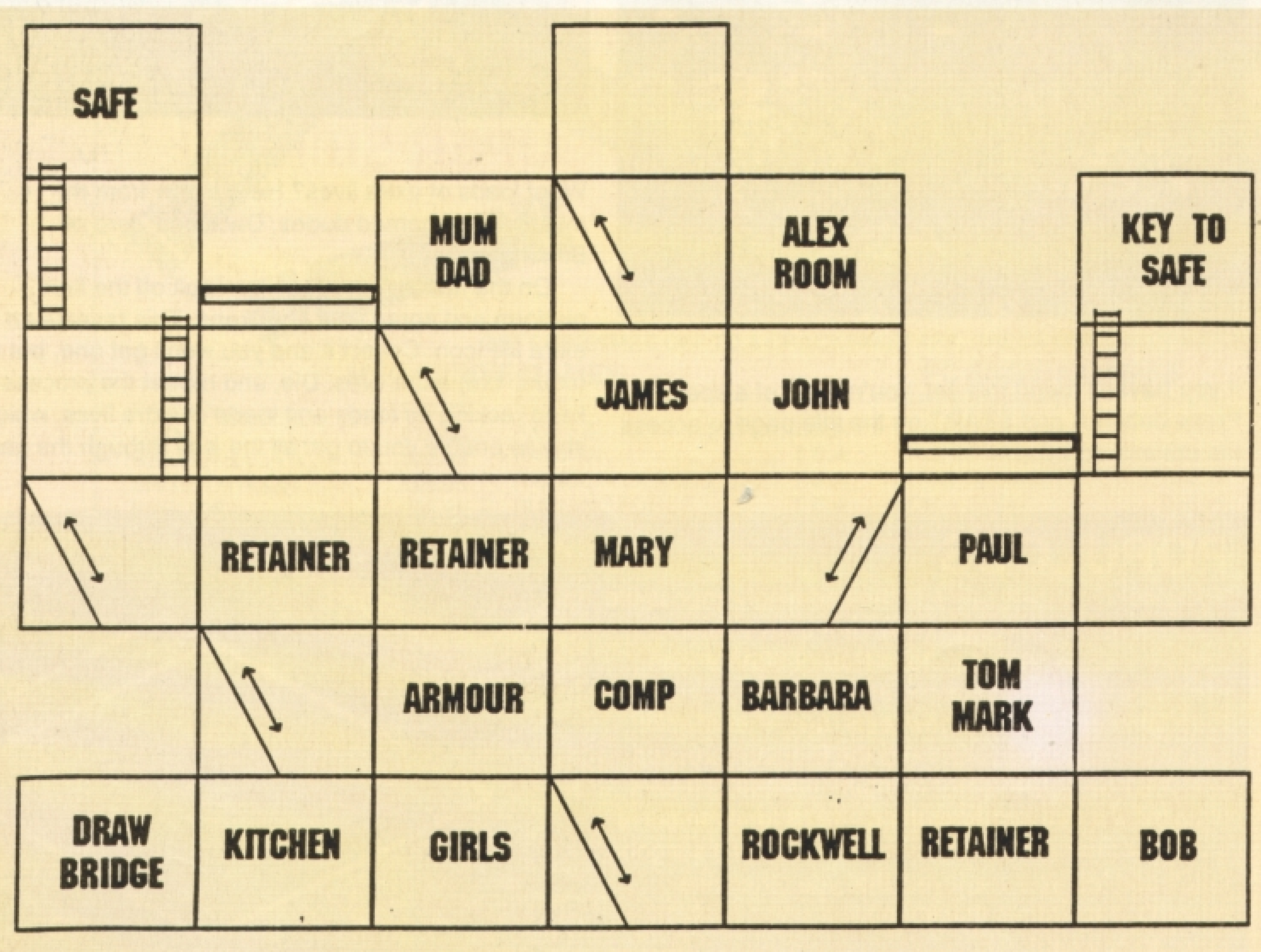
Try to use Dragon A to kill the skeleton soldiers. If you can't, use the jump/slash technique.

When you reach the armoured knights, watch out for their lethal long reach. Take a long run-up and jump while slashing your sword downwards.

On the final level, kill the skeleton soldiers, then do battle with Death Adder. He attacks in set patterns - when he unleashes his fireballs, jump and swing your sword downwards. Do this twenty times and he'll be defeated and you can ogle at the superb end-screen pictures. Oh happy day!







WONDERBOY II

Calvin Hollbrook (or something like that - the writing's difficult to read) of Shanklin has found that if you plug a controller into port two, start the game and press the A button on controller two you'll bring up the status screen. Do this 45 times and you'll get 45 gold coins. Do this as many times as you like to get zillions of coins.

GHOSTBUSTERS

Another Calvin Hollbrook tip. Enter AA as your initials and enter this account number: 1173468723. When you start the game, you'll have $1,975,800! Now you can go and really bust some ghosts!!

SPACE HARRIER

Want to get a 10,000,000 point bonus? Well, on the bonus screens (this works on both of them) shoot five trees only. A space craft zooms across the screen near the end of the level, and if you manage to blast it, all those lovely points are yours.

QUARTET

S Allan has discovered that you can get a wider shot by pressing the pause button 14 times on the title screen before starting the game.

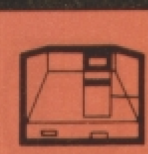
TENNIS ACE

Cheesed off of having to play all the matches in this tennis game? Fear no more, because Paul Truss of Fleet, Hampshire has got a password which takes you to the very last game. What is it? Well, it's:

NKOF VVLG
LKGS FCKK

CHOPLIFTER

Here's a jolly wheeze from Andrew Dunn of Sandhurst, Camberley. On level one, shoot out the ground emplacements and proceed to rescue the hostages. Do the same for level two. On level three travel backwards past the lava pit. To select a level press up, down, left, right and button two. Then do it again.





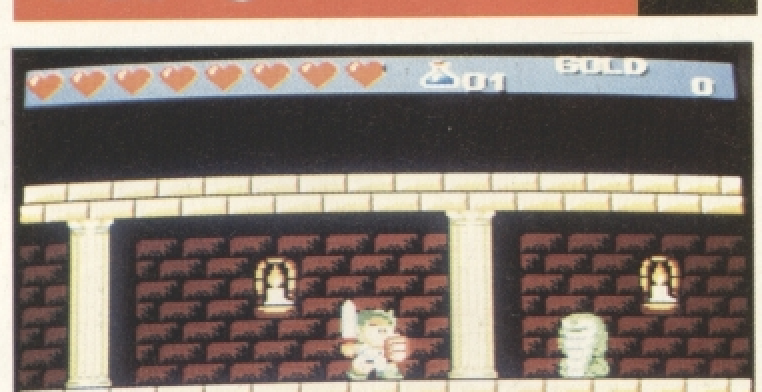
WONDERBOY III

Andrew Strange of Watford, Herts has found a quick way to finish this utterly brilliant game.

First of all, choose continue and type in WE5T ONE 0000 000 on the password screen to get loads of money and a complete armoury.

The game starts in the town, so walk left until you reach the jump block, jump up to the left. Walk past the door and keep walking left until you reach another door. This is a hospital. Get cured and exit. Walk right and enter the first door you come to (this should be the screen with the jump block in it). Go through the door and jump on the jump block. Land on the platform and go through the door. You are now outside a building.

Jump right and land on the platform. Stand on the first two blocks on the left and press up. A door appears - enter it. You are now in a room with a door in it. Go through the door to find yourself in a room with the Vampire Dragon. Kill the dragon (it's quite tricky) and sit back and watch the ending sequence. By the way, make sure you're not the lizard man 'cos he can't damage the Vampire Dragon.













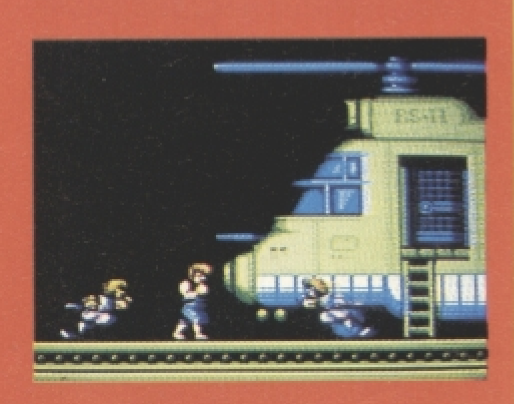


DOUBLE DRAGON

On the fourth level, jump up and down 30 times and you'll become invincible. Cheers to Calvin Hollbrook again for that.









ROBOCOP

Drop it! Here are some tips for the first five levels of this rather disappointing film tie-in courtesy of Eddie Lau of Hayes, Middlesex.

LEVEL ONE

Keep blocking the guardian's punches, then keep ducking and finally stand firm and punch him.

LEVEL TWO

Shoot the grenader and kill him. Also, on the second floor of the building enter the first door and punch the wall, then punch the next room's door. Shoot the hostage and the gunman will let him go (but make sure you have enough energy before you do this). Then keep punching the gunman.

LEVEL THREE

Collect as many guns as possible. Shoot the grenader. Shoot the box next to Clarence, select the sub machine gun and shoot the men.

LEVEL FOUR

Keep shooting ED209's arms, then back away when he shoots.

LEVEL FIVE

Shoot the crane with the big gun, then keep shooting Clarence Boddiker with your pistol.

KID ICARUS

Mark Piper of Ipswich has a quickie for this jolly game. On the password screen type ICARUS FIGHTS MEDUSA ANGELS and see what happens.

METROID

Another crusty, trusty cheat from Mark Piper. Type JUSTIN BAILEY on the password screen for a wild 'n' wacky time.

TIGER HELI

When you lose all your lives, you can continue from where you left off by pushing the A, B and START buttons simultaneously. Thanks to Mark Piper for that.

RUSH 'N' ATTACK

If you're silly enough to get to the end of the first stage of this kill 'n' cook coin-op conversion without any weapons, just go to the extreme right hand side of the screen and keep on stabbing right as fast as you can. Everything that attempts to come onto the screen will be impaled upon your flashing stabber (yak, yak). Yet again, Mark Piper is the one to thank.

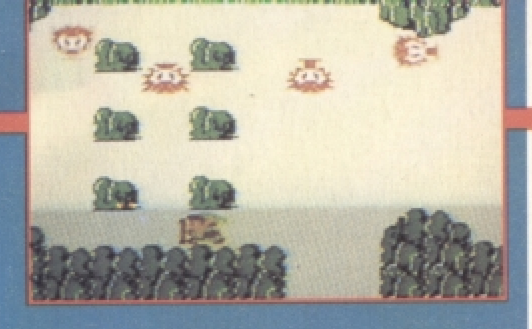
PRO WRESTLING

Here's a veritable footballing frolic, courtesy of Mark Piper. When you're taking a corner, push the controller in the opposite direction of which you are shooting. Then press the A button and the ball will drop into the back of the net, leaving the keeper helpless.

LEGEND OF ZELDA

Hmmm. Highly suspicious. S Allen's tips for this rather neat arcade adventure are a word-for-word copy of the ones that were printed in the Complete Guide to Consoles Book II. Either there's amazing coincidence here, or someone's cheating. Still, if you missed them, here they are.

If you're a real hard, enter your name as ZELDA at the start of the game to begin on the second



quest, which is much harder than the first. If you're a novice player, just enter your own name (unless it's Zelda, in which you better put Ploppy, or something else instead).

Push all the tombstones in the graveyard, one of them hides the entrance to a secret cave.

If a bubble steals your sword, blow your whistle and the game stops for a moment. When the game resumes you'll have your sword back.

Some of the rooms in the labyrinths have hidden doors. So if you're stuck, try pressing the middle of each wall and you might well find an exit!

After giving Gariya your bait, press the select button quickly and hit up and the A button. You should defeat Gariya and the bait will still be in your inventory!

HOW TO DEFEAT THE MONSTERS

LEVEL ONE
If you've got the magic shield, use it now. The guardian shoots in three directions, but he's slow. To kill him, make sure your life meter is topped up, then throw your sword at him.

LEVEL TWO
The sword has no effect on this creature, so you need to feed him two bombs.

LEVEL THREE
The shield doesn't block the beams of this monster, so concentrate on planting bombs in its centre.

LEVEL FOUR
Only the wand and the sword are effective against this double-headed dragon, so give it all you've got.

LEVEL FIVE
First destroy the creature's body. The stun him with the boomerang. Now you shouldn't have too many difficulties finishing him off.

LEVEL SIX
The crab's shell is impervious to attack, so shoot him in the eye with your arrow.



CONTRA/PROBOTECTOR

Here are some more useful tips from Eddie Lau, this time for this coin-op conversion better known in this country as Gryzor. Just before we start, if you press up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B, A on the control pad, you'll start with 30 lives. And the other thing to remember is use the 3-way spray on all levels - it's the most powerful weapon.

LEVEL ONE
At the end of the level, kill the snipers first, then lie down on the second platform and keep shooting at the machinery to blow it up.

LEVEL TWO
Blast your way through the level, then when you reach the guardian, dispose of its bomb launchers first by repeatedly shooting them. The keep shooting at the bubble launcher, making sure that you avoid the bubbles.

LEVEL THREE
This guardian's easy. Keep avoiding its arms and then blast its mouth.

LEVEL FOUR
Use level two tips.

LEVEL FIVE
Shoot the guardian's right hand side, then keep on destroying the disks until it blows up.

LEVEL SIX
Much jumping is needed for this guardian. Keep on leaping over it, then turn and blast. Repeat until it's dead.

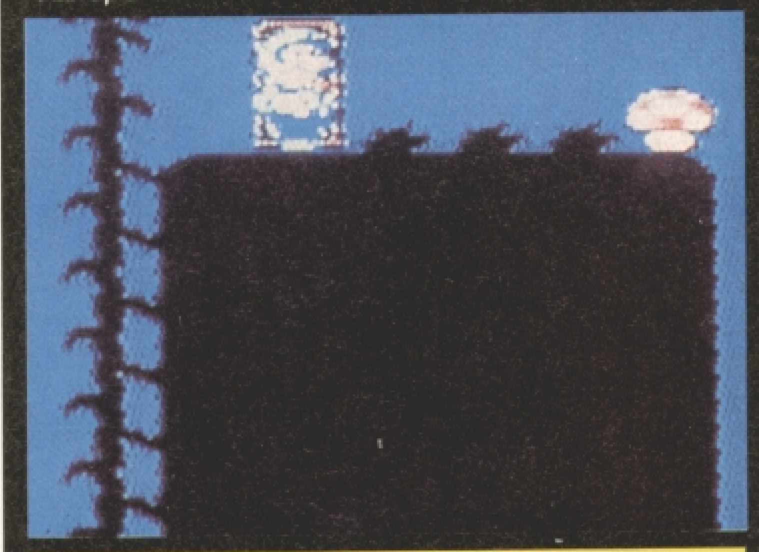
LEVEL SEVEN
Shoot the detonator as much as you can, dodge the bombs, and shoot as much as you can again.

LEVEL EIGHT
On the Red Falcon, destroy the last snow flake launcher, then keep dodging the scorpions and shooting their sprouters. Now stand right next to the Falcon and keep shooting his heart - but don't forget to blast any scorpions that jump at your head.

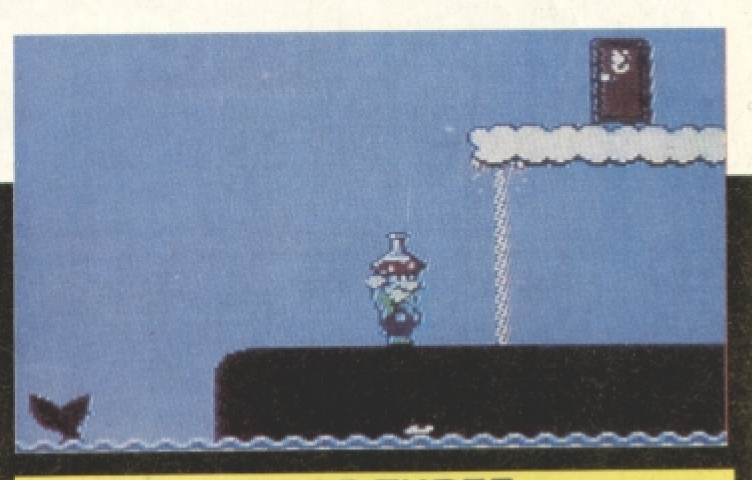
SUPER MARIO II

Fancy a bit of warping laughs and frolics? Read on and check out the four warp zones, kindly sent in by Daniel O'Connor of Sheffield.

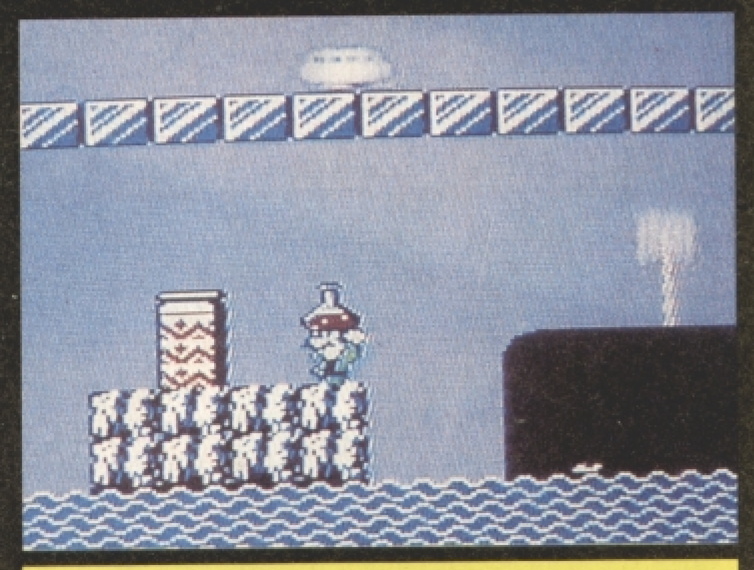
WARP ONE
The first warp is situated on level 1-3. Keep the second magic potion and walk right to the end of the landscape, where there's a pot. Dump the potion by the pot and jump into it and you'll find yourself transported to 4-1!



WARP TWO
On 3-1 there's a big waterfall. Fall into it and at the bottom and you'll find a door. Behind that is a long corridor with lots of plants. Uproot the tenth plant to uncover a potion. At the end of the corridor is a pot. Drop the potion, climb into the pot and you'll warp to 5-1



WARP THREE
On level 4-2 (the one with the whales), take the potion to the first pot you come to. Drop the potion, leap into the pot and you'll be warped to 6-1.



WARP FOUR
On level 5-1, pick Luigi (because he's the only one who can actually get to the pot). When you come outside you see a ledge with a pot and some plants. Do a squat power jump to get up. One of the plants is a potion - throw it down, get into the pot and you'll end up at 7-1.

TIPS HELPLINE

Can't find that vital super sword to beat the final guardian in your favourite game? Are you constantly being beaten by some seemingly indestructible super-baddie or other? Well, here's where your problems can be sorted. Write in to the MEAN MACHINES Tips Helpline with your question, and Julian "Jaz" Rignall, Captain of the UK Video Game team will see if he can supply you the answer. If not, we'll throw the question open to other readers, who might be able to help. Write to: MEAN MACHINES TIPS HELPLINE, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

Oh, by the way. When you write in, don't just say "I'm stuck in Shinobi (or whatever), please help me". I need to know what your exact problem is, otherwise I won't be able to answer! Okay?

WE WANT MEGAPLAYERS

If you're a gamesplaying genius, why not put your name forward for the MEAN MACHINES Tips Helpline. Just write in with your name and address and tell us which games you're good at. We'll print your details in the magazine so that other fellow players can write to you for help - you might even make new friends!!! The place to send all your Tips Helpline letters is: MEGAPLAYERS TIPS HELPLINE, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

MORE ALEX KIDD TROUBLES

Dear Jaz,
Please could you help me on Alex Kidd in High Tech World. I need a pass. Where can I get it from.
Matthew Baker, Romford, Essex
JAZ: If you go to the temple in the village. Go into the temple and pray exactly 100 times and you'll get a Real Pass which will let you go to the arcade.

KENSEIDEN HASSLE

Dear Jaz,
No matter what I do, I can't seem to damage or hurt the final boss, the Master Warlock. Could you give me some tips.
James Higgins, Crieff, Perthshire
JAZ: Hell's bells and stranger smells! I think you mean Yonensai, the Master. It takes three stages to destroy him. When you go into the castle, go up staircase four and there's a warlock throwing fireballs. Use the helmet splitting sword and slash downwards towards the fireballs. When they're all gone he disappears. Next is a warlock in armour. Bash him on the head with the helmet splitting sword by jumping and slashing downwards. The he turns into a skull. Do 13 helmet splitting shots to the face, and then keep on jumping and using the slashing the helmet splitting sword downwards. All the time the damage meter doesn't look like it's going downwards, but it's all a big trick!

MIRACLE SOLUTION

Dear Jaz,
I'm stuck in Miracle Warriors. I've four my three sleeping companions and we're all equipped with ancient armour. I've got the pirate boat, swordsmith, scroll and one key. I've followed the instructions on the scroll (Saria is Medis village) but I've found nothing. What do I do next?
Ben Blackwell, Liverpool
JAZ: First of all you've got to find each of the companion's three special weapons - they're scattered all over the map. Look in the peninsula of Kadmos near the continent of Marula in the mountains, a castle called Elatoria west of Eratos for two of them. I hope this gets you started - you don't give me much in the way of details, so I can only hope this is helpful.

PHANTASY STAR NUTS

Dear Jaz,
Please can you help me. I've got a Sega and have the game called Phantasy Star. I would be grateful if you could tell me how to collect the laerma nuts.
Kevin Lewsey, Northholt, Middx
JAZ: Hmmmm. You have to go to the Altiplano Plateau and "use" the torch at the laerma nut tree. Then you'll get your nuts. As far as I can remember, the Altiplano Plateau is on the planet of Dezoris.

BOGGED DOWN IN CASTLEVANIA

Dear Jaz,
On the fifth level of Castlevania there's the Grim Reaper. He seems to be impossible to get past. Can you help me out?
Justin Laine, Swindon, Wilts.
JAZ: Sorry, old chum. I'm not much cop at this one, I'm afraid. If there's someone out there that can beat the Grim Reaper, write to the tips helpline with the answer and it and your name will be printed next month!

MEAN MACHINES MEGAPLAYERS

Here's where you ace gamesplayers can offer your services and become an honorary MEAN MACHINES Megaplayer. Other readers can write to you and ask for information on games that you know inside out. If you write to a Megaplayer, don't forget to include a stamped addressed envelope! It's nice enough for these people to put their names forward to help you - it's a bit of a cheek asking them to pay to send you a reply!

The first ever person to volunteer for the MEAN MACHINES Megaplayers column is Carl Busby. His specialised games are: Alex Kidd and the Lost Stars, Altered Beast, Spy Vs Spy, Basketball Knightmare, Psycho Fox, Pro Wrestling and Wonderboy III. If you need any help on those games, write to him at 293 Western Avenue, Acton, London, W3 OPP. And don't forget to include that stamped addressed envelope!


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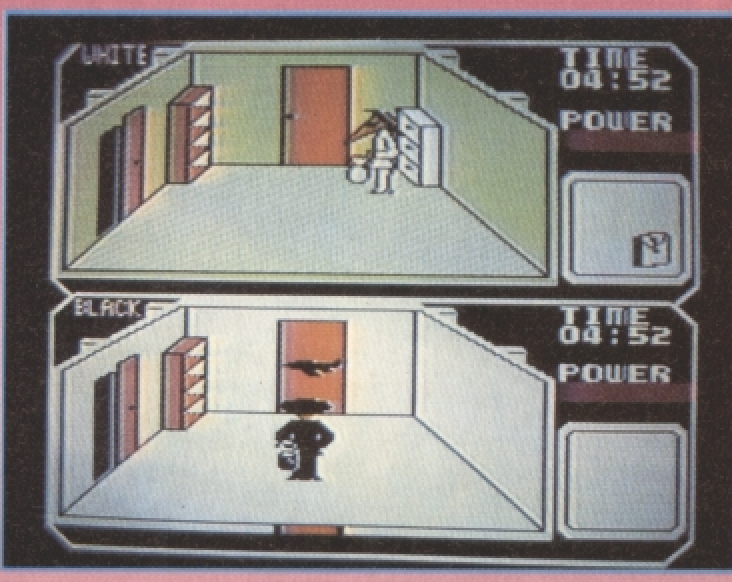
SPY V

Those dirty rotten scoundrels of MAD magazine have appeared in three different games on umpteen different games systems, and now the original classic game of underhand dirty tricks and cunning finally makes it to the Nintendo!

There are eight missions-worth of espionage terror on offer in the NES conversion. In all of them the object is remarkably simple. A selection of top secret items have been secreted around a complex and it's the player's job to get in there and retrieve them. Each mission has a different map layout to conquer and the size of the complex increases on each level.

The task of spying sounds pretty simple and indeed it is. The problem is, there's another spy in the complex with exactly the same mission in mind. It's a good thing you packed your trapulator in your spying trousers, and you can use the traps it contains to keep your opposite number at bay.

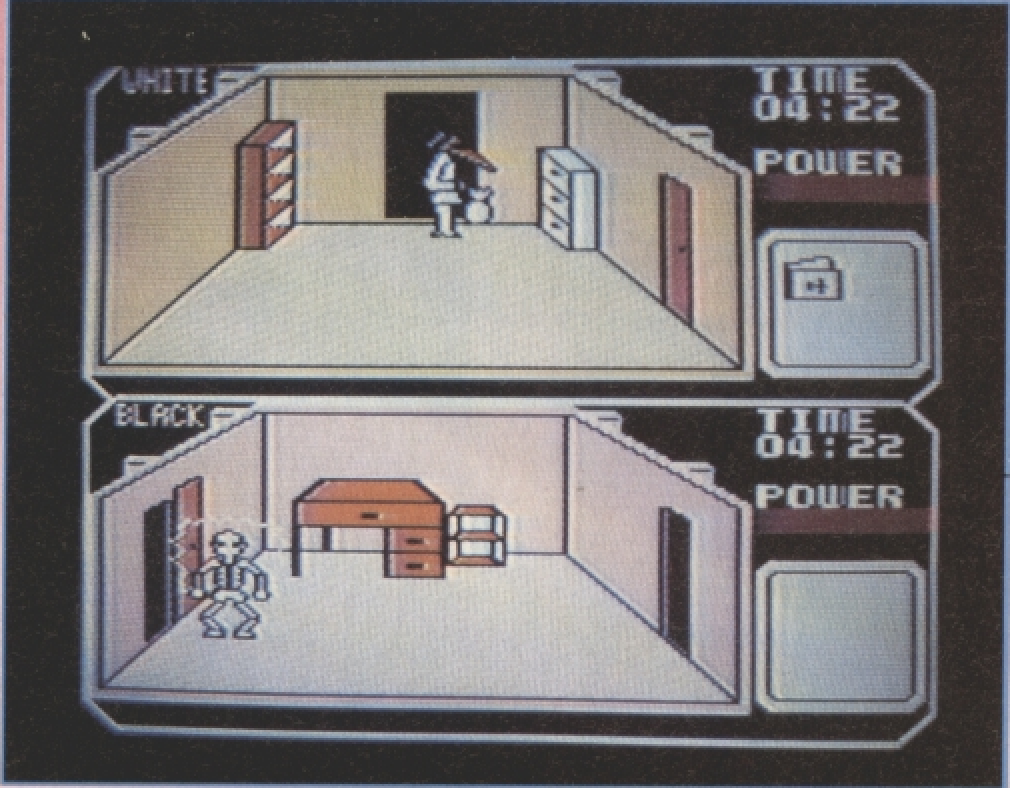
Each level has a strict time limit, so you have to retrieve those items and find the getaway plane before the complex goes the way of the dodo. There's only one winner (and one getaway vehicle) in this game, so make sure it's your spy who has the last snigger as you leave the opposition to their doom!



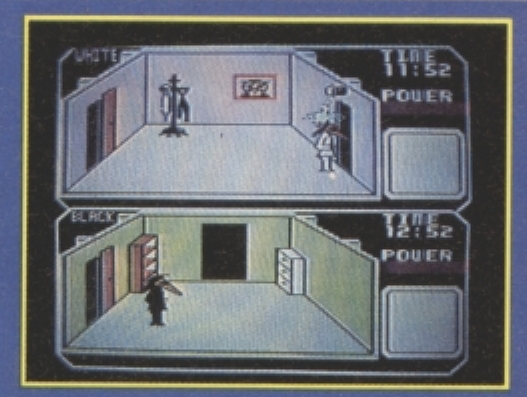
▲ *Black reaches customs, but White's got all the items!*

▼ *Items can be stashed behind pictures!*

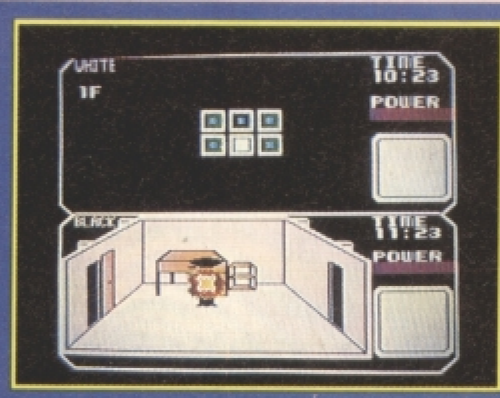




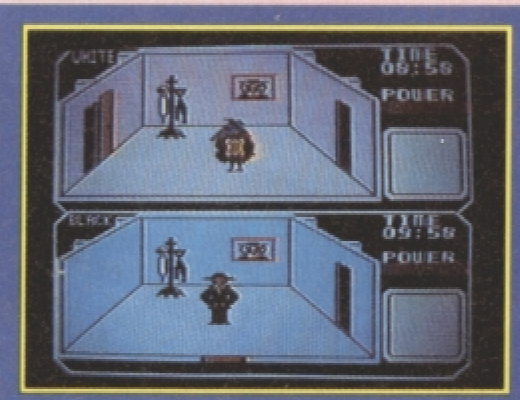
▲ *Electrocution excitement in Spy vs Spy!*



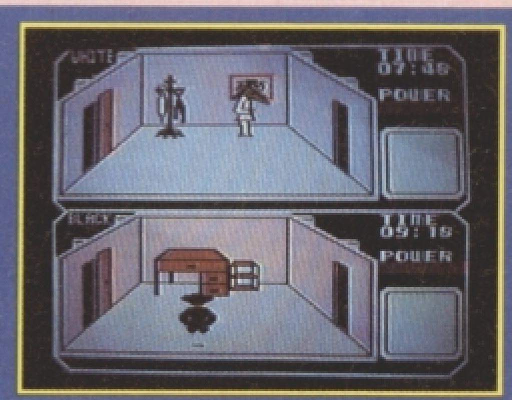
▲ *The White Spy uses his map to locate a hidden item, but Black has left a nasty electrified bucket of water on the door!*



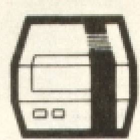
▲ *Black thinks he's onto a winner - one of the objects is in this room. Unfortunately, White's left a dynamite surprise for him!*



▲ *The joke's on the White Spy, though. Black left a time bomb in the room - Boom-shanka!*



▲ *Revenge is sweet - and non-fattening! The Black Spy locates an item and falls foul of a well-placed deadly spring.*





SPY

SPIES LIKE US

Three Spy vs Spy games have been written so far - but not for the console market. This NES game is a near perfect copy of the original Spy vs Spy and is the best of the bunch by far. The follow-up, The Island Caper, introduced scrolling scenery and napalm coconuts (!) whilst Spy vs Spy III - Arctic Antics was really more of the same and had you throwing lethal snowballs at your enemies.



▲ Aaow! Black becomes a bad memory.



▲ Ladders appear to link later levels.

▲ Black reaches customs.

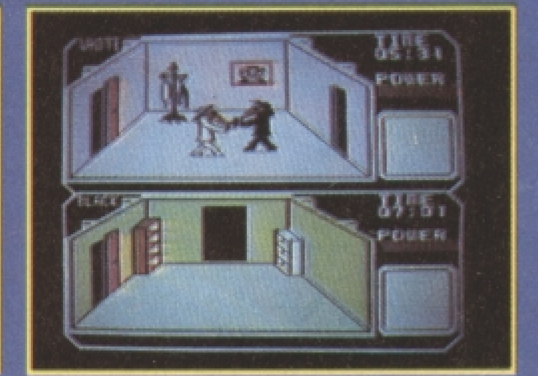
▲ A snigger from Black as White buys the farm!

COMMENT

MATT

Spy vs Spy is a truly terrific game of lethal cunning. It doesn't really stand out that much as a one-player game, but get your mates to join in and watch those hours literally burn away! The graphics aren't really much cop, but at least they're well animated and the Spys' dastardly sniggers have been captured perfectly! But it's the fun of springing one of the hilarious traps on an unsuspecting spy that really makes this game. A great little number and no mistake.

▲ White thinks he's got all the items and heads for the airport. He's forgotten the papers though, and customs are rather brutal!



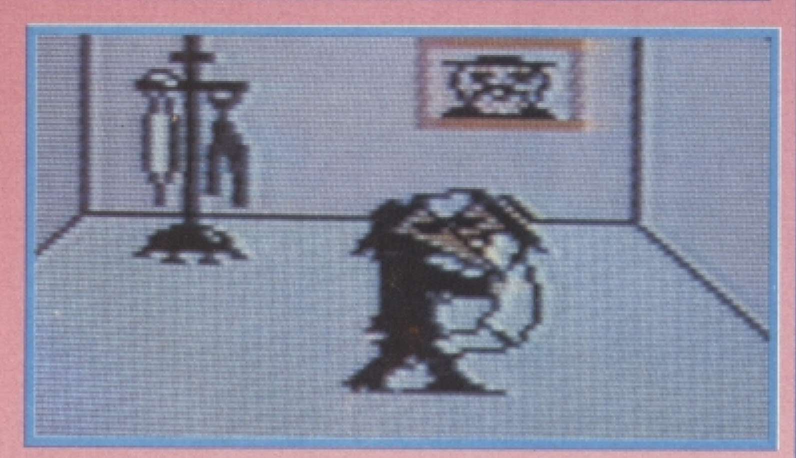
▲ The Black Spy has all the items and heads for the airport - meeting the White Spy on the way! A clash of clubs ensues and Black emerges victorious.



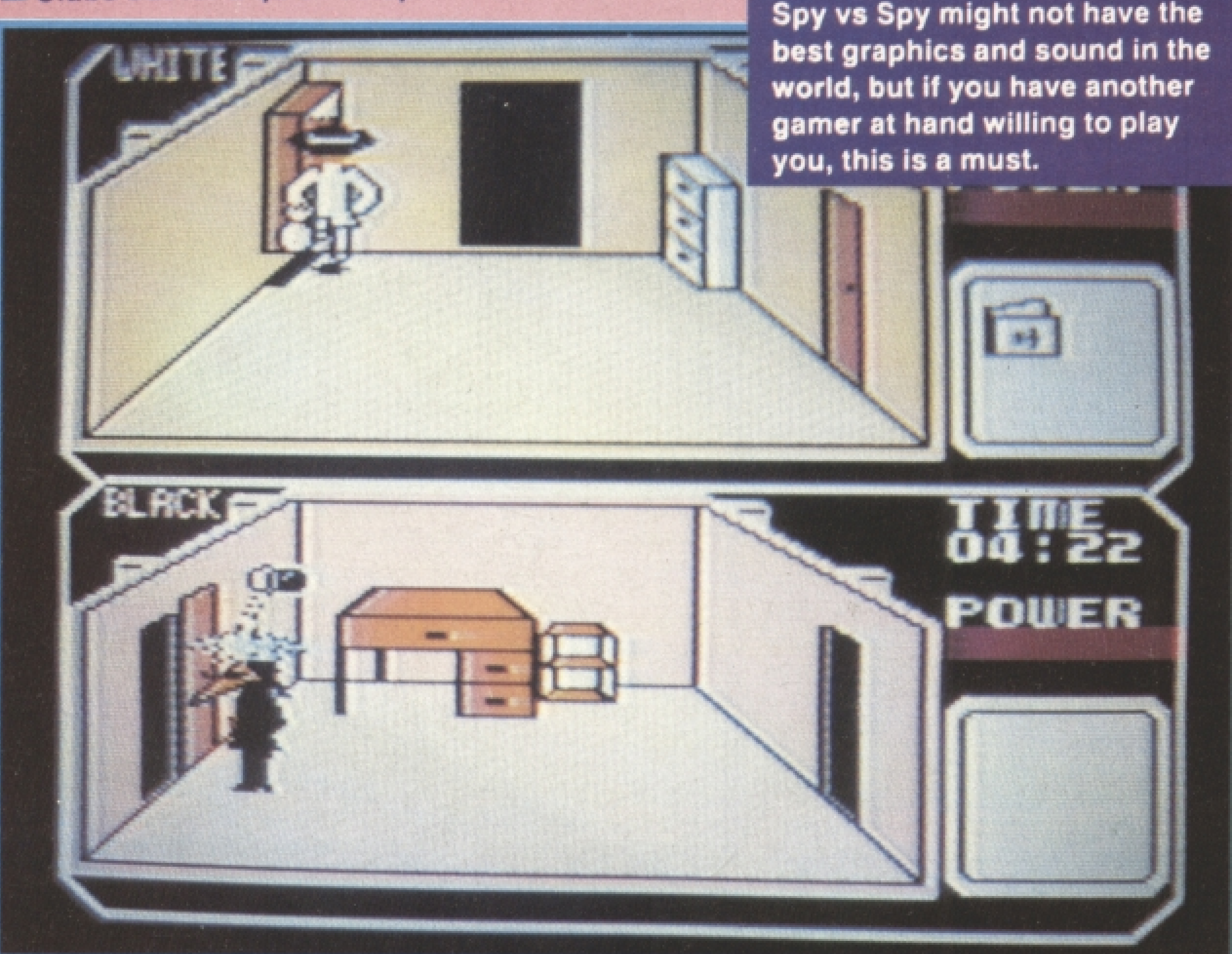
▲ It's a race to the airport as Black collects all the objects. He escapes just in time! Booo! Hiss! Doesn't White look stupid?

SEGA SPYING EXCITEMENT

If you're a Sega owner swooning over this little NES number, swoon no more. You'll no doubt be over the moon to learn that the same game as the corker reviewed here is out and about in a software emporium near you for the dead cheap sum of £9.99! All the fun and cunning of the original is there to be savoured, so go ahead and savour it - NOW!



▲ Clubs out for a quick scrap!



▼ Black is stunned into immobility as White avoids the electrified bucket caper!

COMMENT

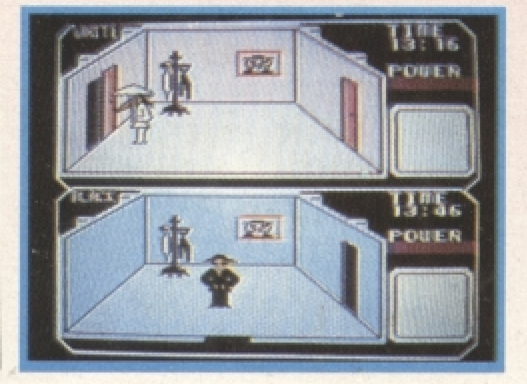


JULIAN

Spy vs Spy is one of the finest two-player games I've ever seen, and allows the combatants to pull the lowest, sneakiest, meanest tricks and stunts ever devised in a computer game. There's nothing more satisfying than letting your opponent think he's just about to escape with all the goodies when in fact you've secretly booby-trapped the door to freedom a few minutes earlier. Watch him frazzle as he opens the door, and then grab the goodies yourself and make a getaway! Brilliant!! Even with one player it's fun (the computer opponent is no dummy), but to really appreciate the game it's best to have a human opponent. Spy vs Spy might not have the best graphics and sound in the world, but if you have another gamer at hand willing to play you, this is a must.

UPHOLSTERY EXCITEMENT

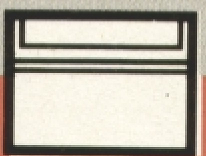
All of the secreted items are hidden in the furniture of each complex. Look out for items like the briefcase and the top secret files. But that's not the end of all these furniture frolics. Some items can be discovered that will protect you from certain traps. An umbrella, for example, will save your head from cascading buckets of electrified water.





BY: NINTENDO
PRICE: £19.99
RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: FLUID







PRESENTATION 79%
Different skill levels abound, but there's a distinct lack of comic-book style presentation screens.

GRAPHICS 73%
Not the best use of the Nintendo's palette, but the humorous atmosphere is successfully captured.

SOUND 73%
Again, not totally awesome, but the sonics do the trick quite nicely, thank you.

PLAYABILITY 88%
Brilliant! Satisfaction guaranteed with each trap successfully sprung!

LASTABILITY 85%
Eight levels to keep you going, but the action isn't that varied.

OVERALL 84%
A classic two-player game packed with fun, cheeky laffs, and a lot more besides.

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Leonardo, the leader of the Turtles fights with a daisho weapon - play Blue and you could be him in this game!

If you pick Orange you must be a fan of Michaelangelo the Nunchuku turtle fighter!

The Purple player will fight with the Bostaff, because this turtle is the clever Donatello!!!

The turtle with the colour of red is Raphael, who is famous not just for his sai fighting but for his jokes as well!!

CALL 0898 404640

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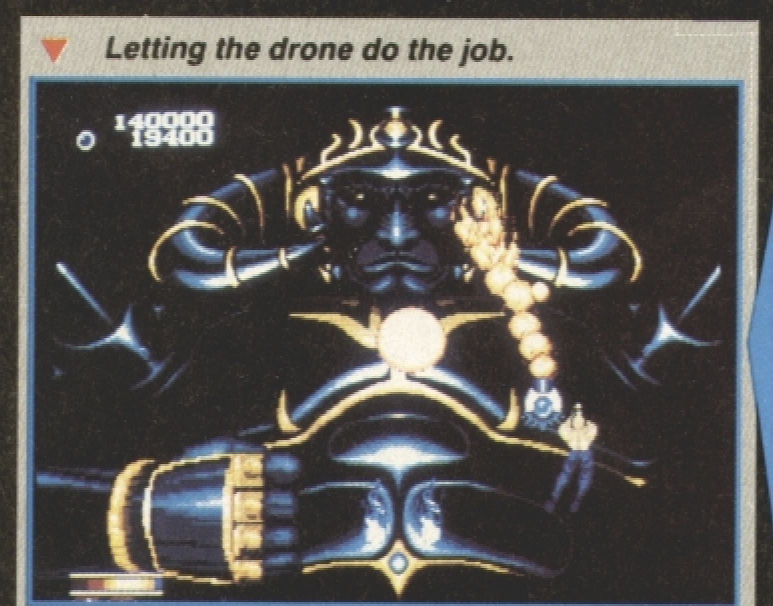


That number one bad dude, Emperor Bios (God of Destruction), has created eight other evil gods and they've ravaged civilisation. The (former) citizens of the ruins are a mite peeved, and have sent two muscle-bound laser-packing warriors to gently persuade Bios to go away.

Forgotten Worlds is a multi-directionally scrolling shoot 'em up with power-ups, shops, and trillions of aliens. Each level features different backgrounds as you progress through the ruined cities. The creatures - which come in an astonishing variety of shapes and sizes - attempt to stop you, but your satellite and firepower can stop them in their tracks. Once an alien has been blasted, it conveniently turns into cash that you can pick up.

Money can be used to buy extra weapons, health, information and various other goods in the shops which pop up on each level. And you really need to get yourself tooled up if you're going to beat that fearsome God!

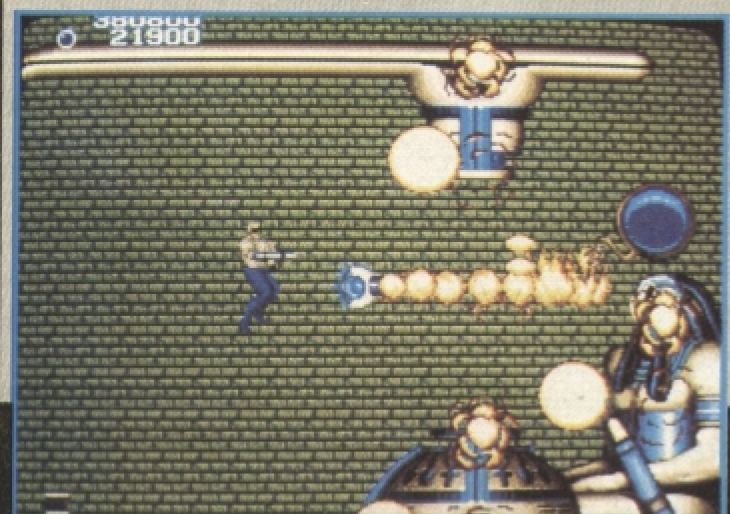
Letting the drone do the job.

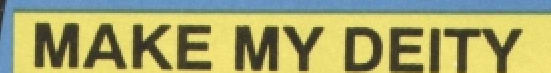


Worms on toast - ugh!



He'll have you screaming for your mummy!





MAKE MY DEITY

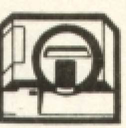
The end of each level is guarded by one of Bios' chums, who all happen to be evil gods. As well as being visually different, they all have their own forms of deadly attack. The first is Paramesium, a circular metallic creature, surrounded by a protective ring of drones. Next is the Fiery Dragon. Then things start to have an Egyptian flavour, as the God of War and the Sphinx rear their ugly heads. You battle through these nasties until you reach Bios himself - a winged demon on a throne!



Bullets fly at the hero from all sides.









Umm... a bottle of Lucozade and a 500 watt plasma rifle please.

Watch out for descending cogs.

He's behi-i-ind you....

Erect snakes thrust from below!

When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping.

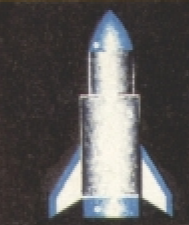
COMMENT

MATT

From the moment Forgotten Worlds starts, it screams "quality!". I don't think I've seen better graphics on a Megadrive shoot 'em up: it has some superb parallax scrolling, and best of all, you get to shoot hordes of alien scum with ridiculously large weapons - pure bliss! Arcade perfect, with loads of extras and special effects, the only let-down is the music; not bad, but not up to the standard of the rest of the game. This is a brilliant, addictive game - I want to have its babies.

WEAPONS

Once inside the shop, the collected dosh can be sploshed on helpful items. Here's a selection of the best choices.



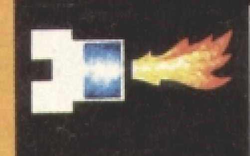
ROCKET

At 5000 zennies, heatseeking missiles are cheap and highly effective. Stock up early in the game!



FLASK

This potion of resurrection starts in price at 3000 zennies, and adds an extra life.



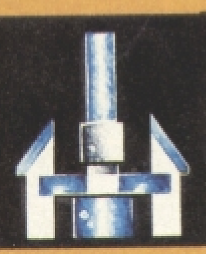
BURNER

A spiffy weapon that creates sheets of flame for attack. A whopping 20000 zennies.



VITALITY

This increases the length of the hero's life meter, giving a chance to take more damage before dying.



LASER

There are three types of lasers, going from weedy to the rather fab "bendy" lasers.



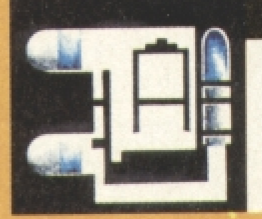
HEALTH

Fills the life meter to the brim, allowing yet more punishment to be taken. The cost? From 300 to 10000.



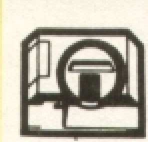
ARMOUR

Protects the hero from damage until the armour is destroyed.



BOOSTER

Classic power-up for the standard weapon. Can be purchased up to three times -if the dosh is forthcoming!

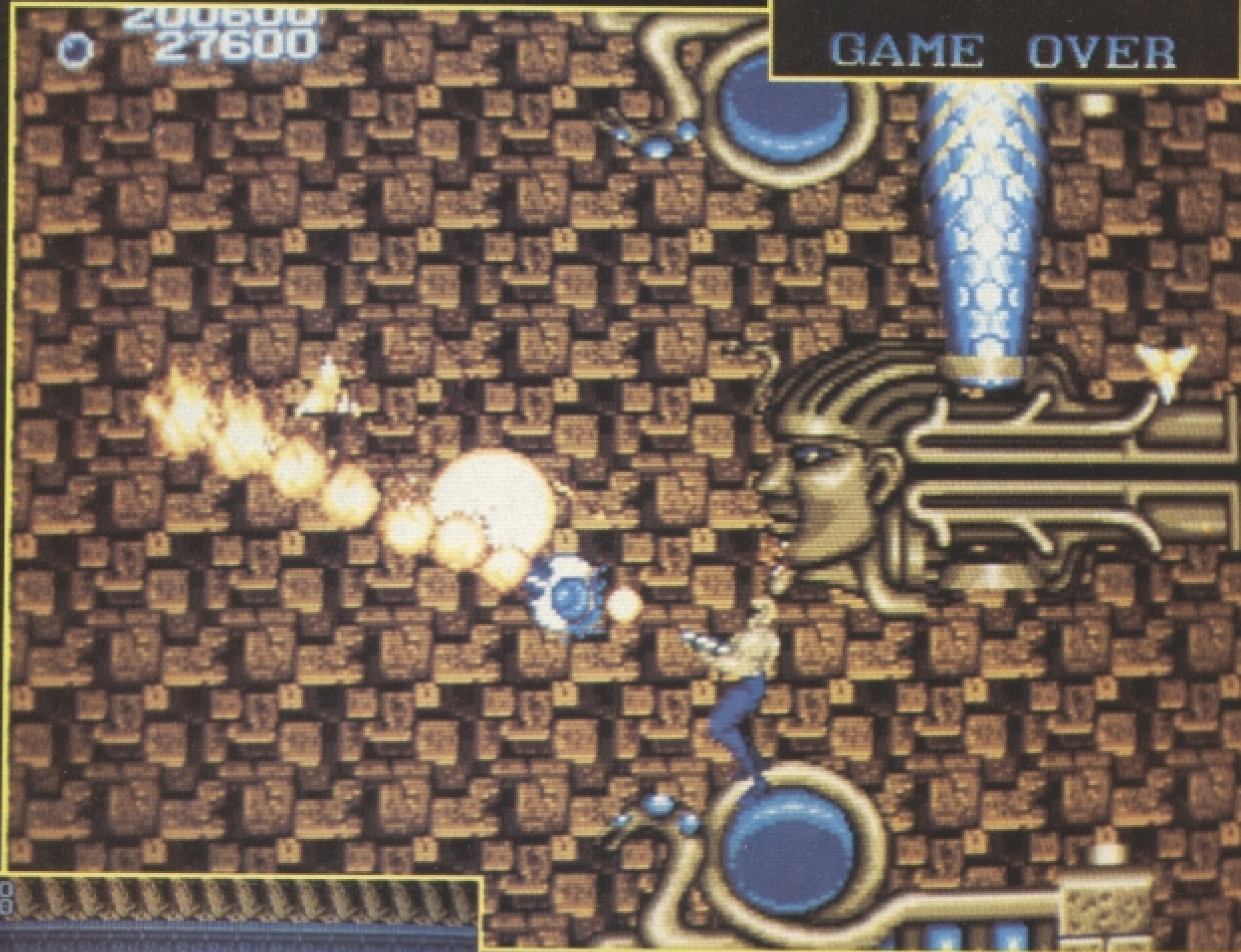


REVIEW



Death comes to tea.

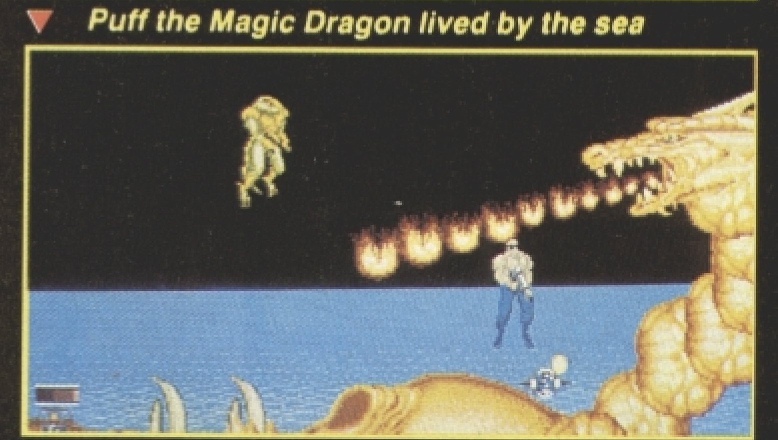
It's a pharaoh way to the end of the level.





▲ Paramesium eats laser!

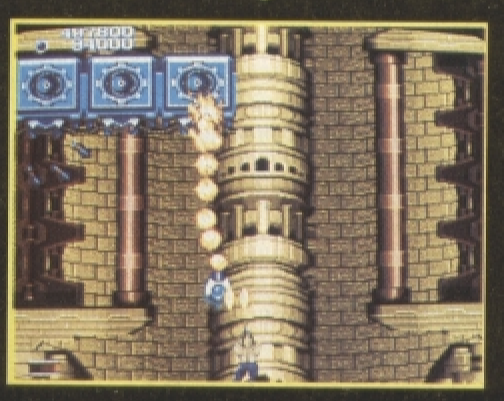
▼ The Ice World - dozens of Gary Kasparovs leap to the attack.



▼ Puff the Magic Dragon lived by the sea



▼ Approaching Bios' domain.



COMMENT

JULIAN

Forgotten Worlds certainly gives you the chance to work out that itchy trigger finger! There's a whole pile of baddies just waiting to be blown away in this frantic shoot 'em up. I like the idea of collecting cash to buy extra weapons, as it adds a little bit of strategy to the action - do you power-up now, or save your cash for an even more powerful weapon on the next level? The graphics are excellent - very similar to the coin-op - and the sound is good, again faithful to the original machine. My only gripe is that experienced gamers might themselves completing the game fairly quickly due to the easy "Normal" level. However, on the "Hard" level, the game offers a challenge that'll tax even the swiftest of reflexes. Give it a go if you fancy a good blast.

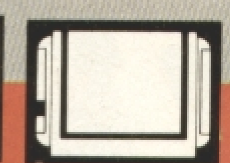


BY: SEGA

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: OK

1-2 PLAYERS





PRESENTATION 88%

Cartoon-like frames between levels and the shop options make this a treat.

GRAPHICS 91%

There's no faulting the brilliant scrolling and sprites!

SOUND 79%

Not up to the standard of the rest of the game, but good nonetheless.

PLAYABILITY 88%

Tricky to get the hang of, but once you do the blasting's terrific!

LASTABILITY 82%

Easy on the "normal" level; tough on "hard". However, it's got so many features you'll keep returning!

OVERALL 85%

A superb conversion - arcade perfect and loads of fun!

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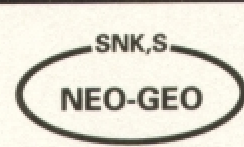
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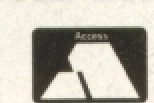


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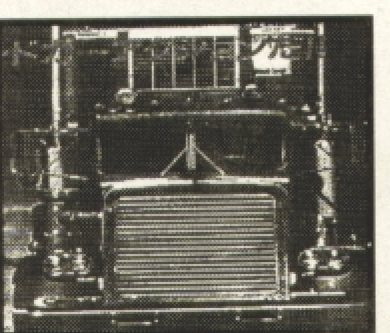


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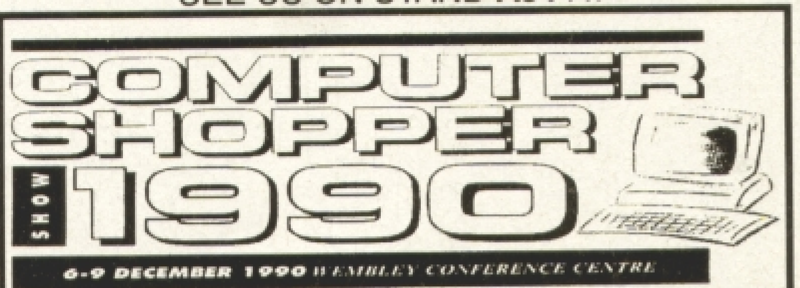
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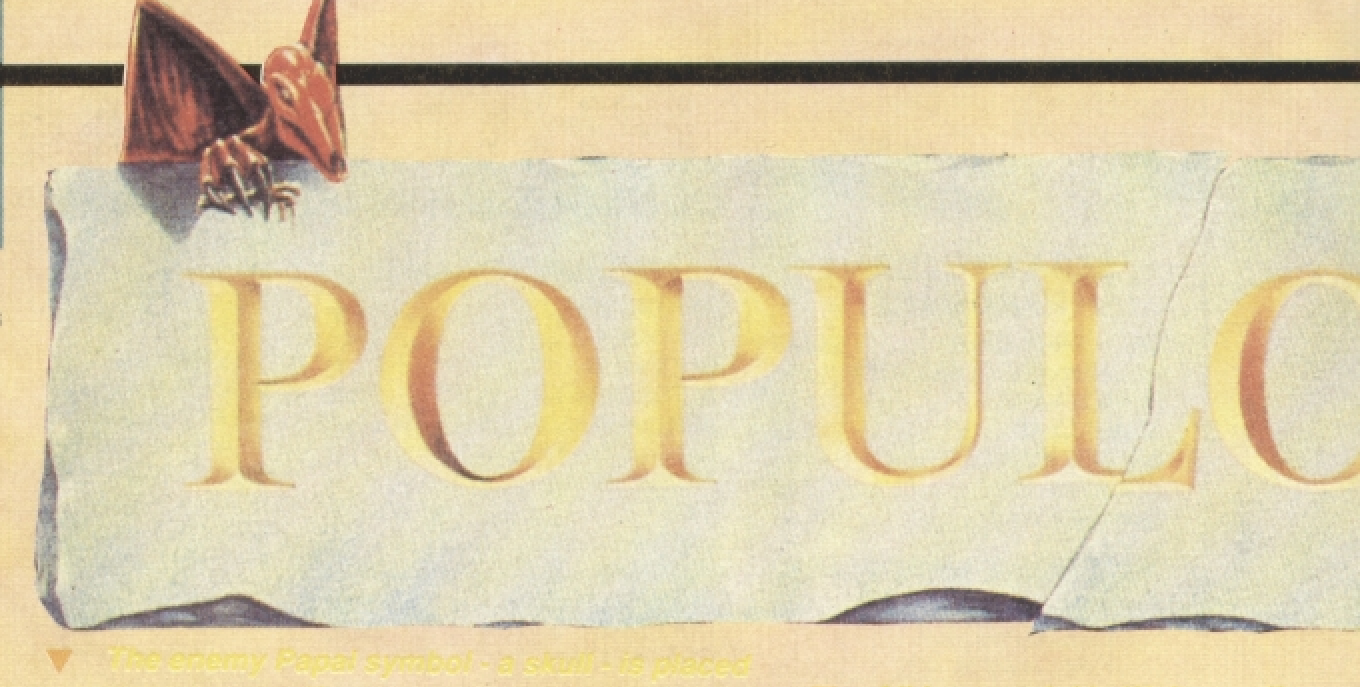


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REVIEW



Ever felt the urge to play God? Now you can, thanks to this amazing Megadrive 16-bit computer conversion from Bullfrog/Electronic Arts.

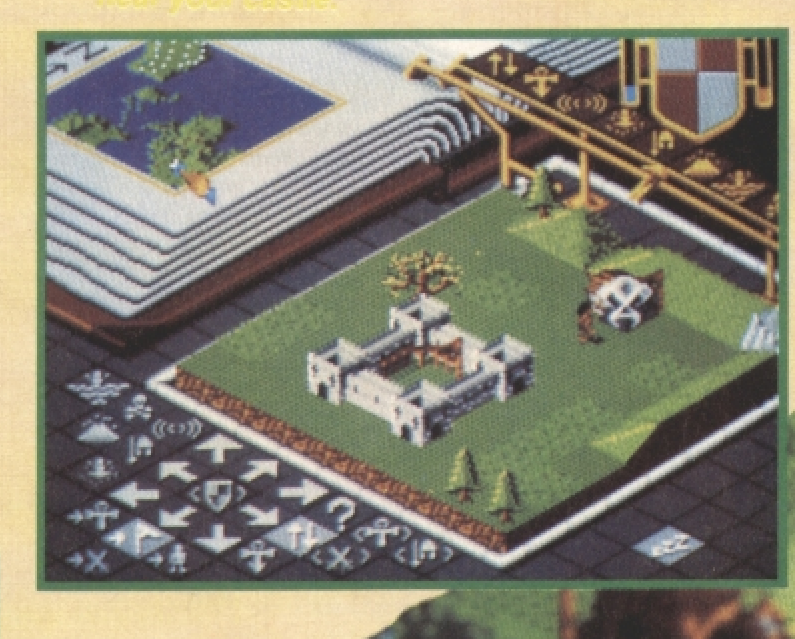
The object is to eradicate the followers of the evil God - your opponent - by constantly improving conditions for your own followers. Raising and lowering the land gives your people a flat surface to live on, and they build houses in which to "create" more followers. And the more followers you have, the more manna (energy) they produce, and the stronger you become.

As you become more powerful, earthquakes, floods, and swamps can be created to destroy those who serve evil, and you can order your people and even create knights to fight and kill the enemy.

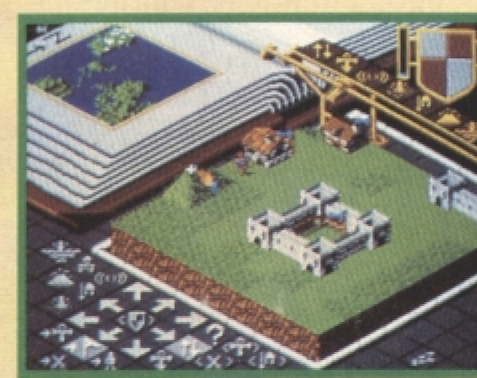
Success can only be achieved when all the enemy's people have been wiped out. Needless to say, he's not going to take this lying down! All the time you're cultivating the land, he's doing the same - so be prepared for the worst.

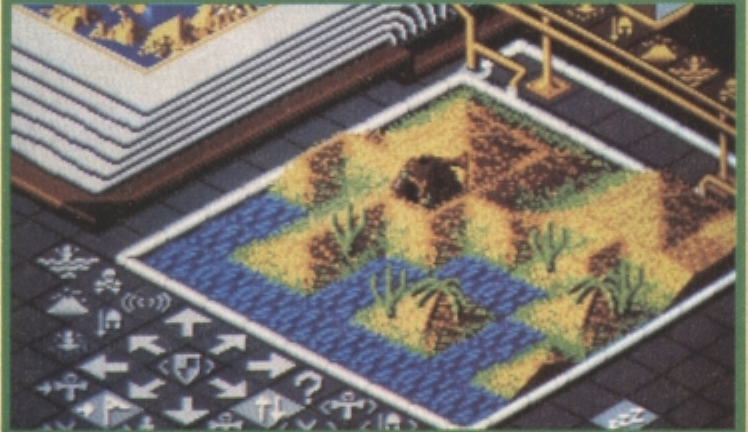
When you've destroyed all the evil God's people, you move onto the next level. There are 500 in all, and the evil God's abilities increase the further you progress - on later levels you need all your cunning to defeat him! Well, who said a God's life was easy?

▼ The enemy Papal symbol - a skull - is placed near your castle.



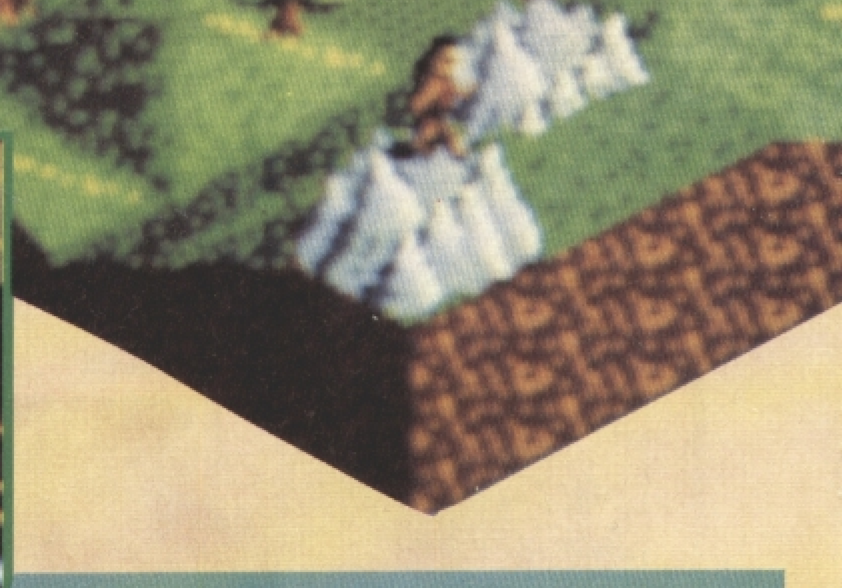
▼ All is peaceful in Walton valley.





▲ The basic hut that the followers build.





HOUSEY HOUSEY!

The type of dwelling that your followers build is determined by the amount of flat land nearby that they can farm. They start off in tiny huts which soon become log cabins, keeps, and eventually full-blown castles. The more buildings you have, the more manna (energy) is created. The type of building also determines the technological level of the inhabitants - and how good they are at fighting off attacking enemies!



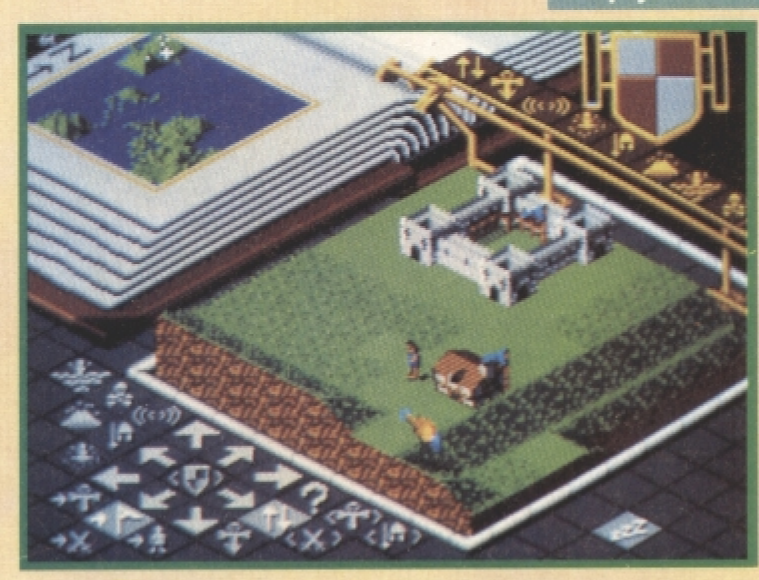


OUS™

COMMENT

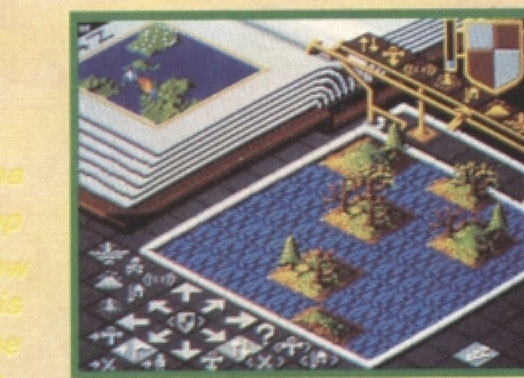
Populous is one of my favourite games on the Amiga, and I'm thrilled to see that this conversion is perfect in every respect. It's certainly not an arcade game, but neither is it a boring, long-winded strategy game. The little people are hilarious - they sometimes stop to think, tapping their feet and wondering! The control system works surprisingly well on the Megadrive, and the game retains all the quality and addictiveness of other versions. Simply brilliant.

MATT

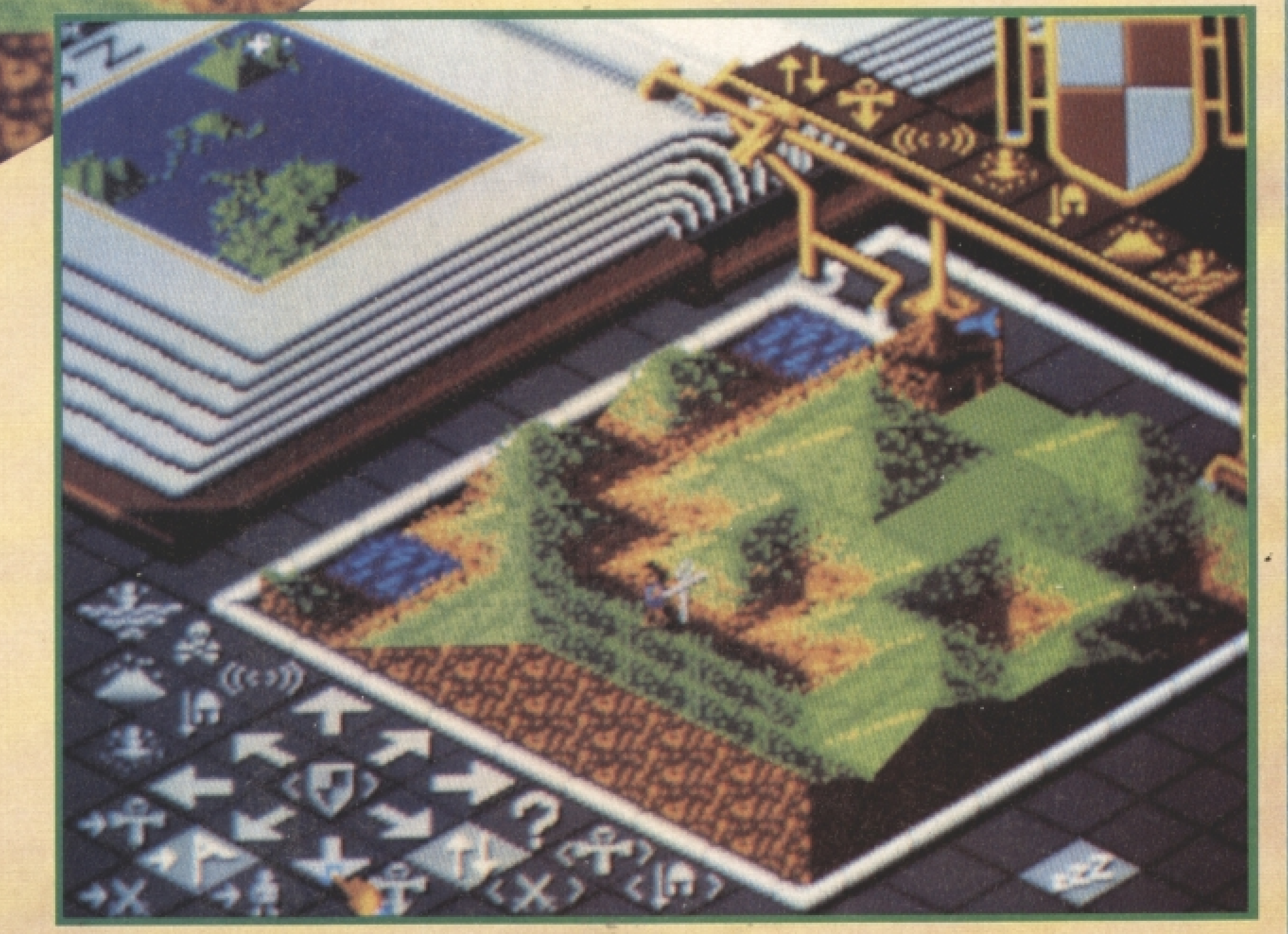


▲ *The icons at the bottom of the screen send divine messages to your followers.*





▼ *The manna bar at the top right shows how much power is available to be unleashed on the enemy.*



SOME LIKE IT HOT

There are four basic types of world in Populous. The first and most pleasant to your people is the Grassy Plain, around which are scattered trees and rocks. Next is the Ice World, which will kill your walkers if they travel too far. Desert World is just as inimical to life, with just a few palm trees for cover. The most impressive is the hostile Rocky Hell, surrounded by a sea of lava - a good tactic is to drop the evil people into it!

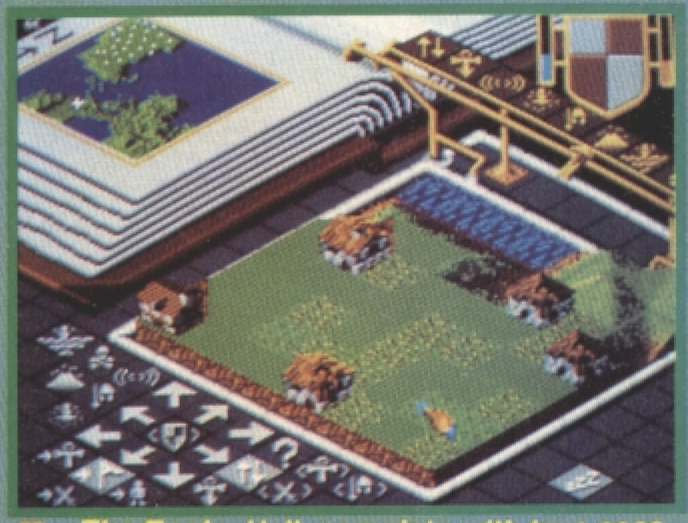
▼ *Brrr! Ice World's inhospitable landscape.*



▼ *You'll never go to the beach again!*

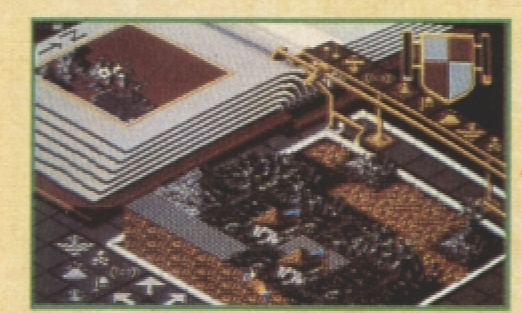


▼ *A pleasant pastoral scene*



▼ *The Rocky Hell, complete with lava seas.*





▲ The results of a volcano - try building on that!

◀ Home sweet home.

A KNIGHT ON THE TOWN

Lots of laughs can be had by creating knights. To do this your Leader must be in a castle, the energy of which is absorbed by the new knight. He then heads directly for the enemy, killing and burning as he goes (don't ya love it?). This seriously depletes the Evil God's manna, but if your knight gets killed, it's even worse for you!

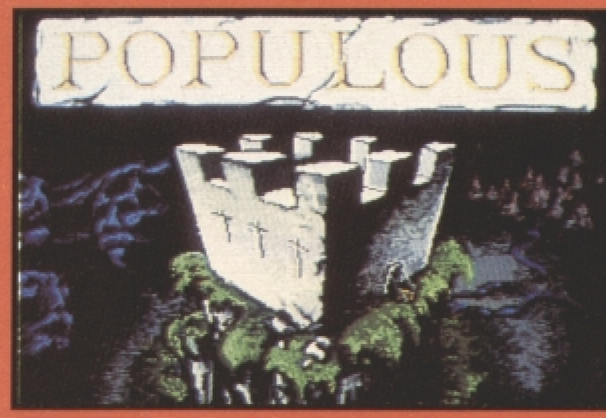
COMMENT



JULIAN

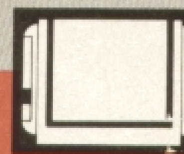
When I first saw this, the seemingly complicated icons and distinct lack of mega laser death weapons put me off. However, after playing it a couple of times I was well and truly hooked. It's a weird game, neither arcade or true strategy, but once you start getting into the action it quickly becomes one of the most addictive games you'll ever play - it kept me up for many late nights! It's incredibly rewarding watching your followers grow and prosper, and very, very satisfying plotting your enemy's downfall, especially when you see his little men fall foul of a swamp, get drowned by a flood or get bashed up and their houses burned by your mean 'n' meaty knight! Populous is an utterly brilliant game and is a real departure from the usual Megadrive arcade style games. Who needs super death weapons when you can stick a stonking great volcano up your enemy's nose, and then ruin all his good work with a land-wrecking earthquake?





BY:TRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £34.99
RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: UNLIMITED
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: SUPER







PRESENTATION 92%

Great opening screens, easy-to-understand icons and generally superb in-game presentation.

GRAPHICS 91%

Excellent landscapes, and the sprites have to be seen to be believed.

SOUND 87%

Those great Gregorian chants are there, and the rest of the effects are up to a high standard.

PLAYABILITY 92%

As soon as you've learned what the icons do, you'll be completely hooked.

LASTABILITY 95%

With 500 levels and an increasing challenge you'll keep coming back time and time again.

OVERALL 93%

This game has earned a place in the chronicles of computer gaming for a good reason. It's stunning.

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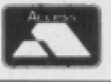
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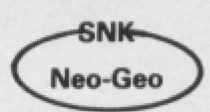
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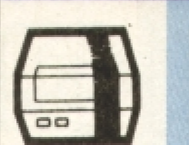
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ROADBL

It's back to the future in this all-action driving game for the Nintendo. Set in a period of lawlessness and anarchy (sounds good to us), you must complete fifty levels of driving to get to Sunset Strip.

Of course this is not as easy as a trip down to your local Tesco. There are other cars on the road intent on putting an end to your jaunt, to say nothing of the mines, toxic waste, and gun emplacements who would just love to ruin your day (sounds like Southend seafront to me - JR).

Despite all this, fuel is your biggest worry: it decreases at a frightening speed and can only be replaced in two ways: complete half or all of the level, for which you are rewarded extra fuel, or collect the fuel pods that periodically appear - and seem to be moving at 150 mph!

A helicopter flies over at the beginning of each level and delivers special goodies such as nitro boost and even cruise missiles. These make life easier, but it's a long haul through the barren wasteland, and you need all your skill to succeed!





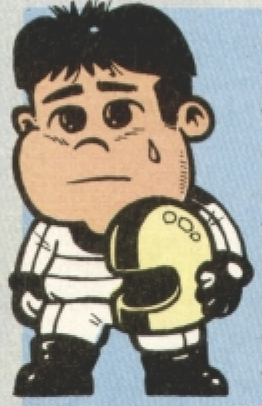
▶ *The helicopter delivers a special weapon.*

◀ *The electro shield doin' the do.*



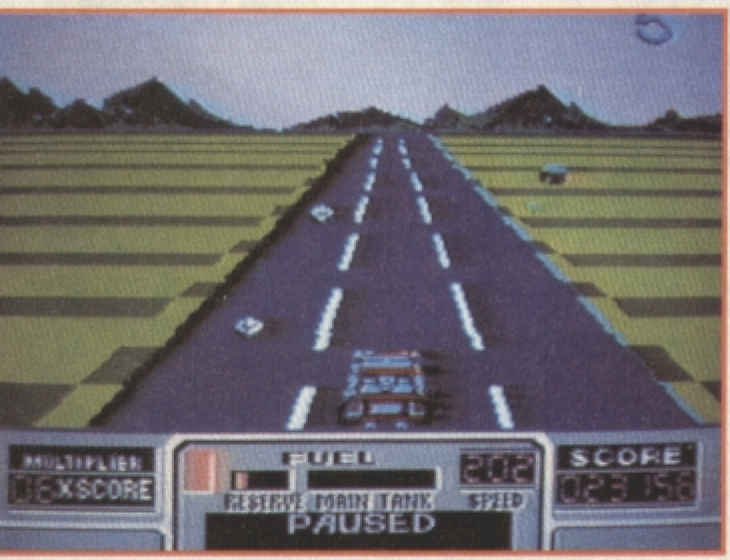
▲ *Corners can be tight - keep steering as well as shooting.*

COMMENT



I was addicted to this game at first, but I must admit the interest's wearing off now. The basic idea is great, and lots of fun, but having 50 levels is not very exciting when they're all pretty much the same. It's all very easy, but if you're new to games, and speed and shooting is your thing, you might find this fun - it gives an excellent feeling of speed. Anyone else, however, should heed the words of the ancient Peruvian saying: try before you buy!

MATT



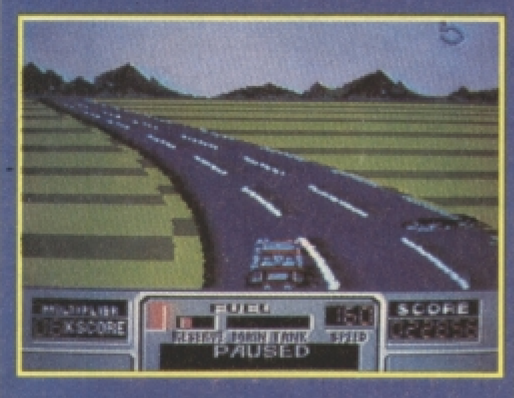
▲ *The score's multiplied by eight in this example.*

LEARNING TO SCORE

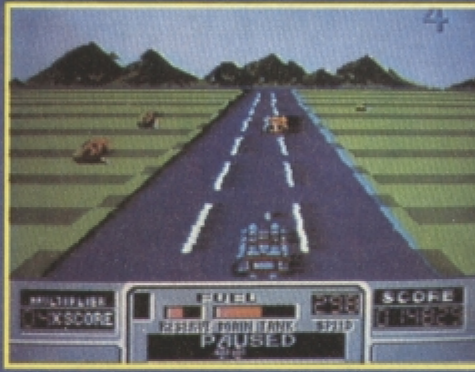
It's possible to boost your score to undreamed-of totals. If you destroy an enemy vehicle with one shot, your score multiplier goes up by one, to a maximum of ten. This means at maximum multiplier you get ten times the normal score for anything you hit! However, each shot that misses a target reduces the multiplier by one - puts the pressure on, eh?

GET OFF MY WHEELS!

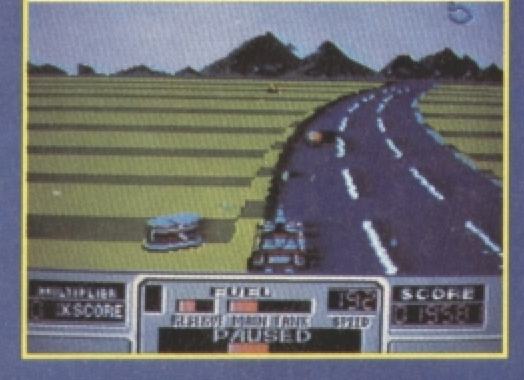
The power-ups dropped by the helicopter are a god-send. Here's the list...



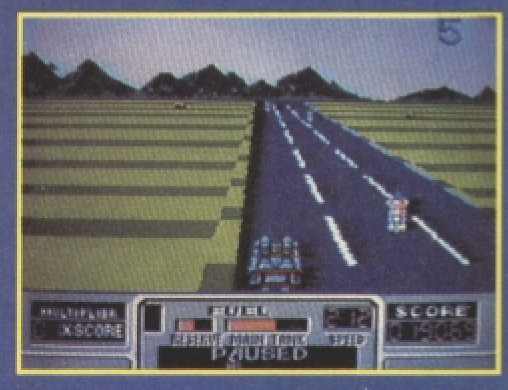
NITRO INJECT: Boosts your top speed up to 298 mph for a short while. You get three of these at a time.



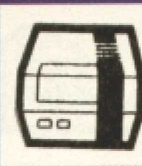
ELECTRO SHIELD: Makes you invulnerable for a time. Well 'ard!



CRUISE MISSILE: Total destruction of everything on the screen, but be careful 'cos this includes fuel globes as well!



UZ CANNON: Rapid-fire shots are yours courtesy of this baby. Let 'em have it!





...ASTERS

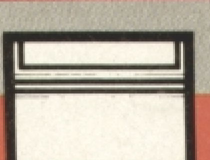
▼ *Ta-da! You've completed the stage!*





BY: MINDSCAPE
PRICE: £34.99
RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: VERY EASY
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 3
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: MEDIUM



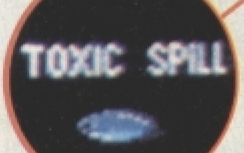












ROAD HOGS

Gosh, what a lot of careless drivers! Everyone's determined to ruin your Sunday out. Here's a selection...

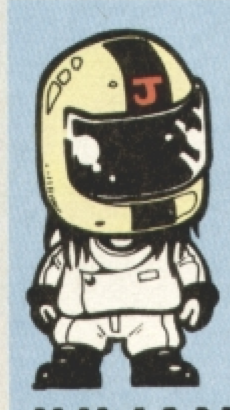
STINGERS: The standard orange cars. They get in your way and try to make you crash. The answer? A shot up the botty!

CYCLES: These really are a pain as they dodge around the road at high speed. Bend their chassis with firepower.

MINES: Cunningly similar to fuel pods, these cause instant death. Sharp driving gets you past.

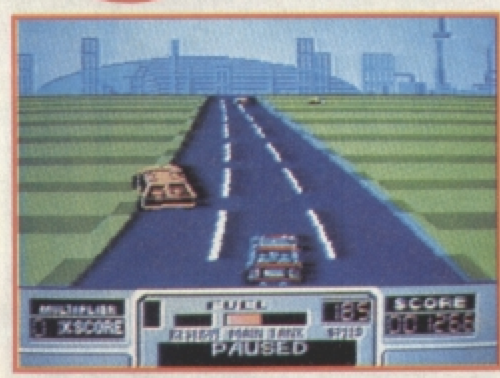
TOXIC SPILLS: Make you spin round on the road, and possibly crash into other vehicles. Avoid if possible!

COMMENT



I liked arcade Roadblasters a lot, but I'm afraid this Nintendo conversion is a b-i-g disappointment. It looks like Roadblasters (albeit with very fuzzy graphics), and it even sounds like Roadblasters (but without the speech). But it certainly doesn't play like Roadblasters. The original coin-op was challenging and addictive - this version certainly isn't. It's incredibly easy, and I finished the game on my second go with over 1,500,000 points! And once you've completed the game, there's nothing to draw you back to it.

JULIAN



▲ *Metropolis on the horizon.*

PRESENTATION 75%
Not too wonderful, but the level select screen is rather flash.

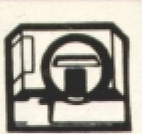
GRAPHICS 73%
The impression of speed is great, although the backgrounds and sprites are dull.

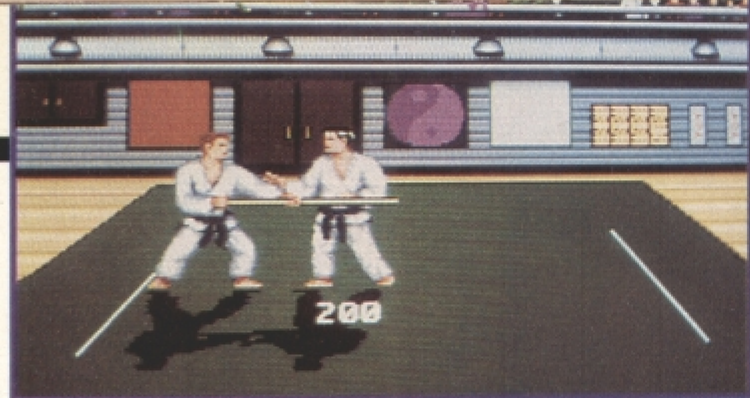
SOUND 71%
Mainly sound effects, but not bad.

PLAYABILITY 68%
Very easy - almost too easy - to get into and play. It also suffers from dodgy collision detection and rather samey levels .

LASTABILITY 41%
It only takes a few sessions to finish the game completely, and once you've done that it quickly becomes boring and dull.

OVERALL 47%
A run-of-the-mill conversion let down terribly because of the lack of variety and challenge.





BUDOKAN

Let's get one thing straight from the start - this isn't your standard beat 'em up. That isn't to say you don't hit people - far from it; but skill and thought play more of a part than in most games of this ilk.

The player takes the role of a young, ambitious martial arts novice attempting to learn four different skills: Kendo, Karate, Bo (using a long staff), and Nunchaku (a weapon consisting of two short sticks connected by a chain).

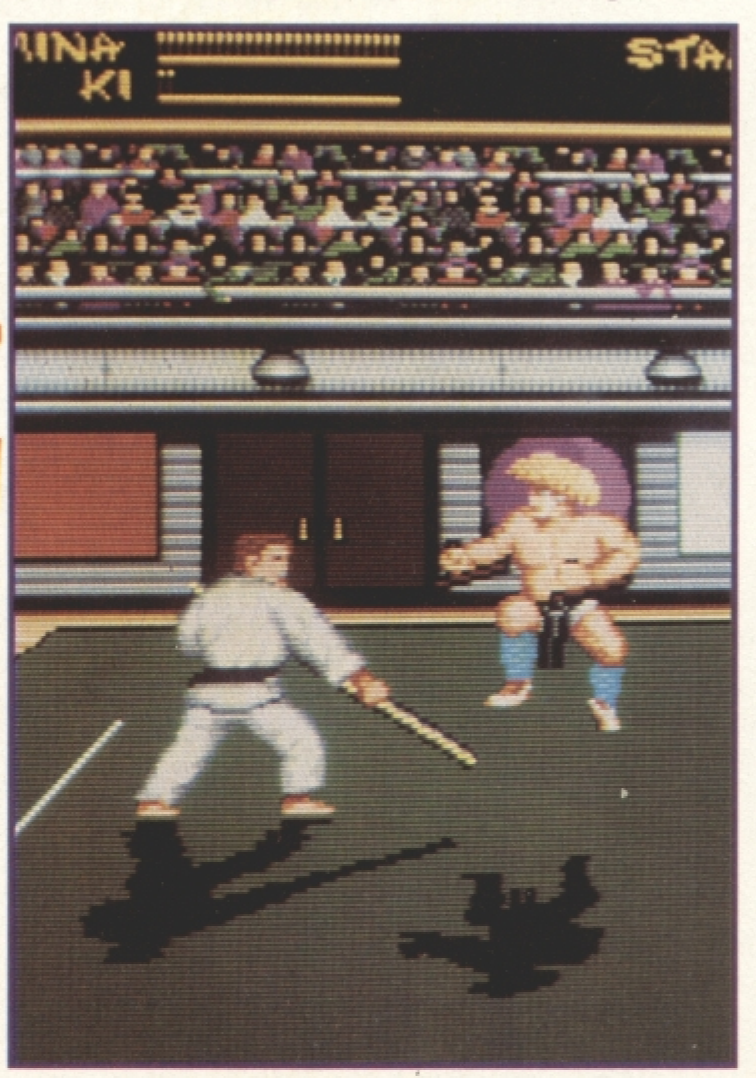
First a discipline is chosen by walking into the corresponding dojo, or school. There you have the choice of practice, or sparring with one of three opponents.

During a fight, your stamina and Ki levels are very important - the former displays how tired you are, and the latter determines the power of your blows. They both increase the longer you avoid being hit, but decrease when you move, or get hit. An opponent has similar levels, and the object is simply to decrease both his levels before yours diminish to zero.

There are an enormous array of combat moves to learn, all of which are detailed in the manual. You have to study this, or be beaten to a pulp every time!

After every bout, Tobiko-Sensei, your mentor, gives you a rundown on your performance so that you can see where you can improve your abilities.

All this leads up to competing in the Budokan itself. In this championship you select a discipline and are then shown information about your foe. Studying this reaps rewards in the arena, as you have three attempts at defeating him (or her!). There's even a two-player option so that you can knock the stuffing out of a friend. Are you ready for the challenge?

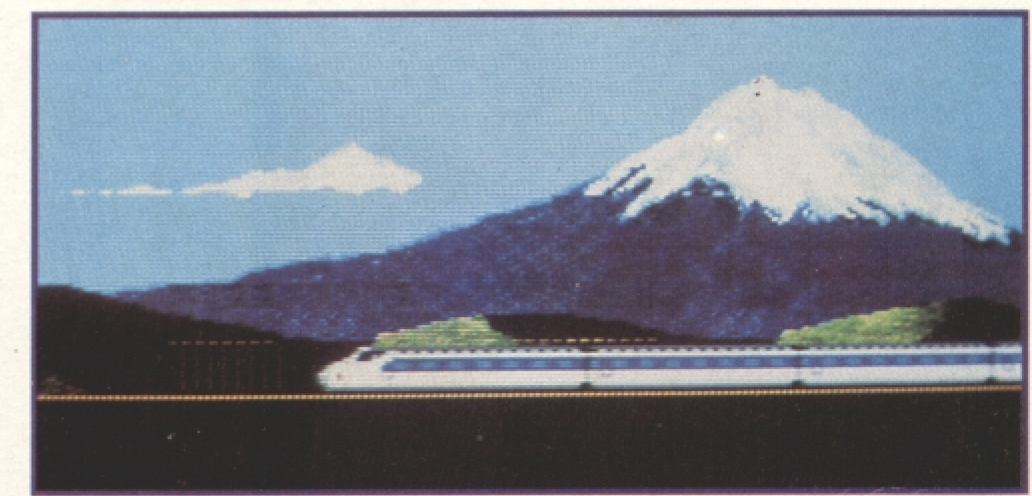


▲ *He may have a bowl on his head, but don't underestimate his skill.*

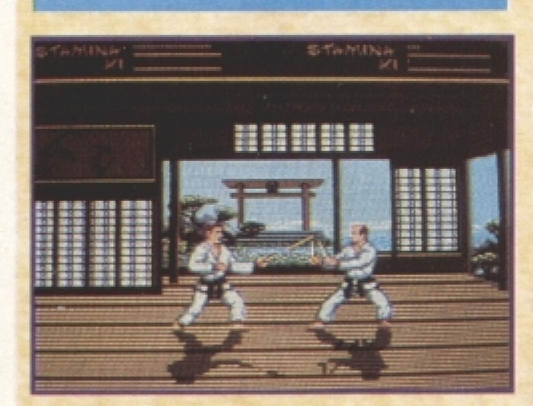


▲ *The game's goal.*

▼ *All aboard the bullet train, on your way to the tournament.*

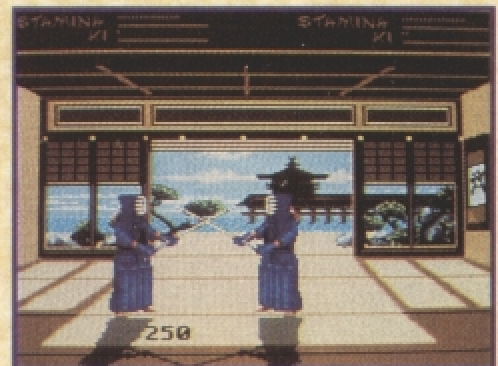


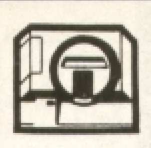
THE FOUR DISCIPLINES



NUNCHAKU: This started off as a grain thresher, but its potential as a weapon - you swing or flick it at an opponent with crippling effect - has meant it has been introduced as a discipline in many Japanese dojos.

KENDO: The Samurai of feudal Japan placed enormous importance on their abilities with their swords. Because these blades were incredibly sharp, practicing with them often resulted in injuries or fatalities, so Kendo (with its bamboo swords as weapons) was introduced as a safer alternative. Nowadays it is a fully-fledged art.

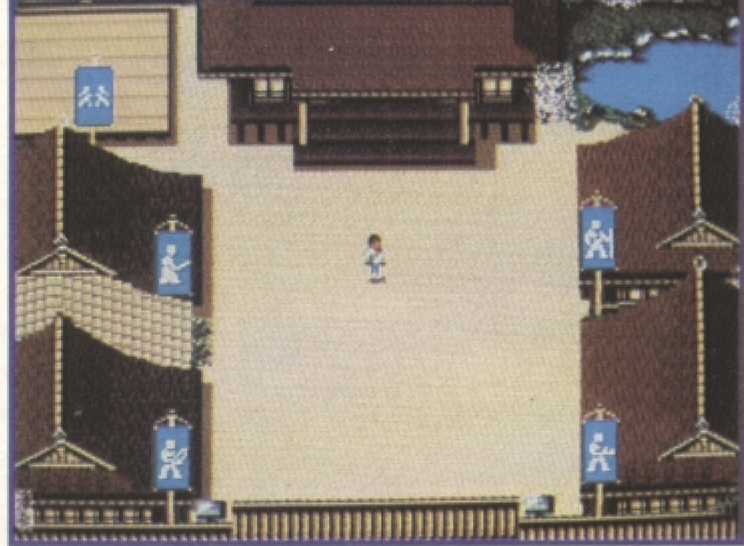








Choose a discipline by entering a dojo.

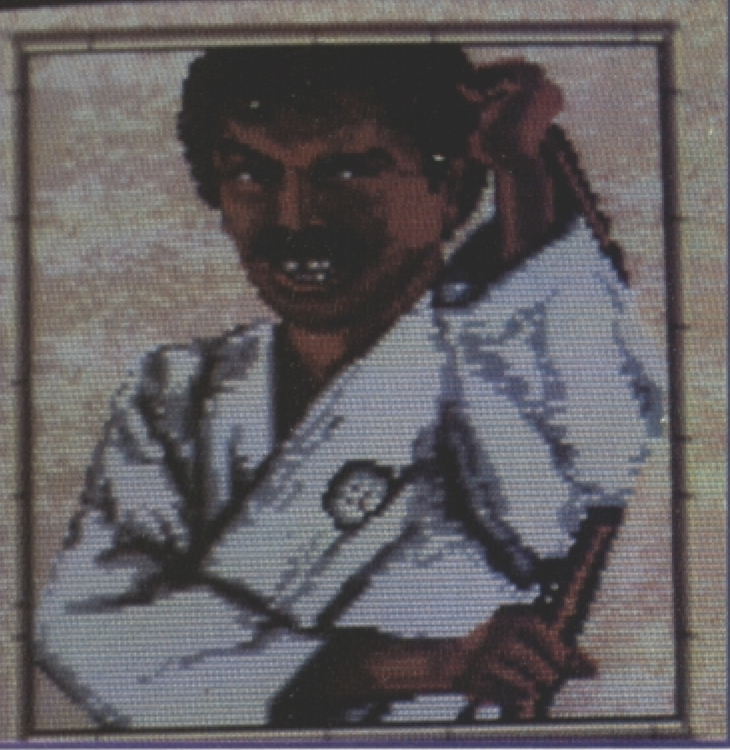


COMMENT

MATT

I was ecstatic to see this game come on to the Megadrive, which has a number of good beat 'em ups - but nothing like this! Sure, the controls are difficult to master, but perseverance soon reaps rewards: there's nothing like delivering a spin kick to the head! I particularly like the range of options, as all four arts require different skills and tactics (my favourite is kendo). It's a gorgeous-looking game, with real excitement to be had. It's maybe not as immediately grabbing as some arcade games, what with Ki playing such an important part, but has a depth and sophistication rarely seen. Highly recommended!

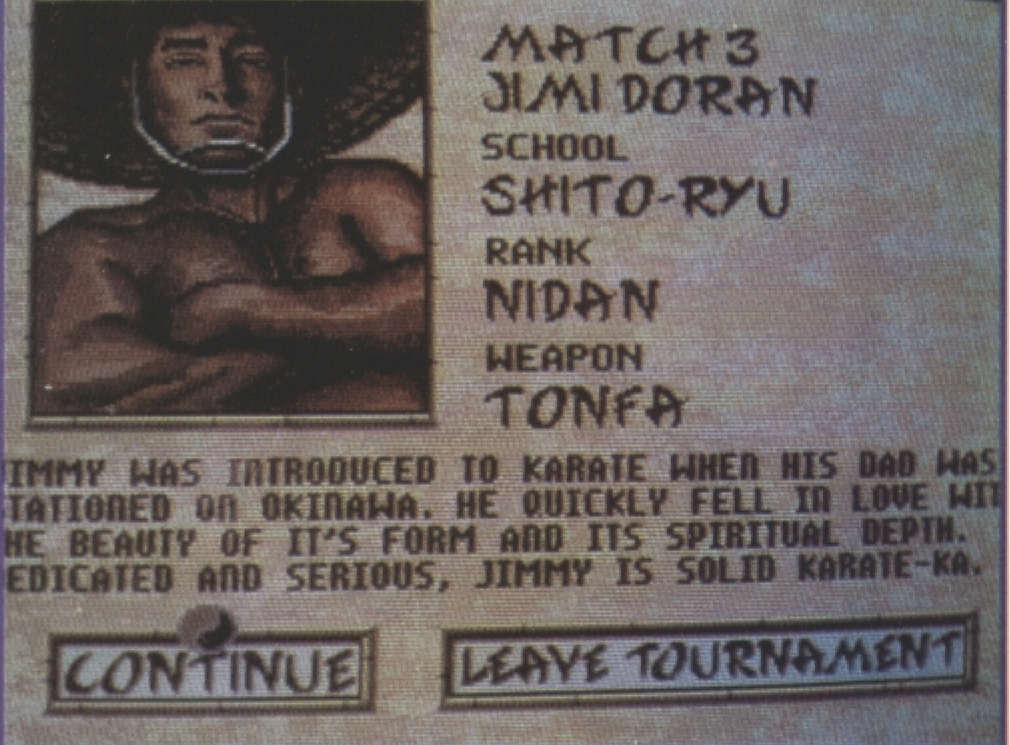
Shigeo, an expert with nunchaku.



THE KI TO HAPPINESS

Get to grips with the idea of Ki before starting the game. You must take breaks between attacks so that your Ki level rises, and at the same time avoid letting your opponent strike you. Backing away can help, but be careful - if you retreat too far, you commit a fault and lose half your Ki! Be sneaky; if you hit your foe while he's building Ki, he'll lose half too.

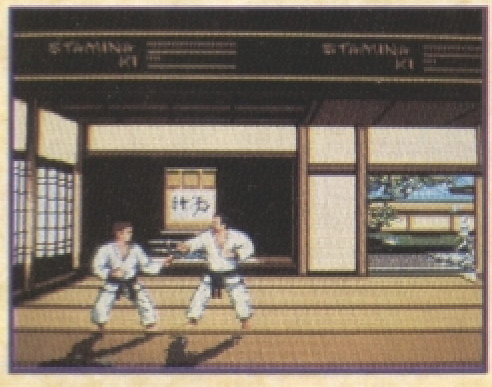
Time for the weak hearted to leave!





KARATE: The classic martial art, made famous by the likes of Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan. It evolved on the tiny island of Okinawa, where the locals were forbidden to carry weapons. Literally it means "empty hand", and is deadly when practiced by a master - but is designed for defence, not attack.

BO: The Bo is a six-foot oak staff that can be wielded to stunning effect when in the right hands. It was originally used by samurai to gain an advantage against sword-swinging foes - the Bo's length giving its holder a longer reach. Capable of crushing bones, this is a martial art to be reckoned with.

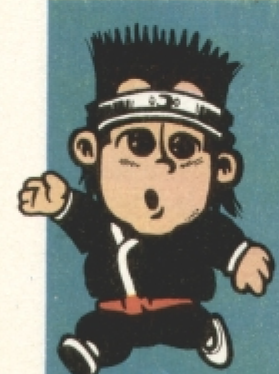






REVIEW

COMMENT

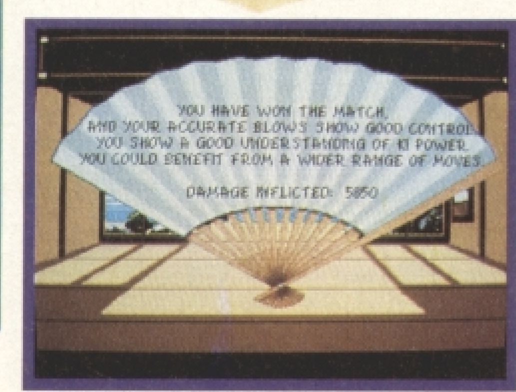


JULIAN Budokan really adds a new twist to the beat 'em up genre - it's a thinking man's fighting game. You have to use both your brain and reflexes as you balance stamina, Ki and pure skill to outwit the opponents. The sheer variety of moves take time to master, but practice reaps its own rewards - you really feel a sense of satisfaction and achievement when you start to make headway in the Budokan. The graphics and sound are both top-notch, and with tough opponents to beat, Budokan is highly recommended to beat 'em up fans who are looking for a real challenge.



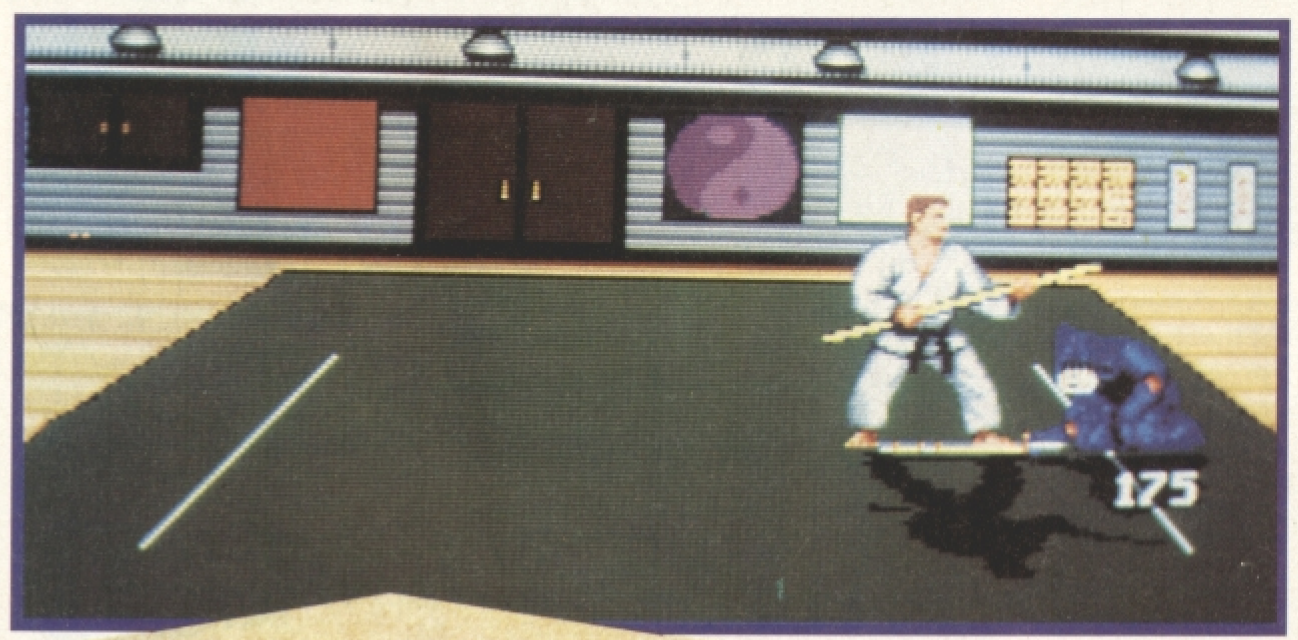
ASK THE BOSS

In a game this complex, you need advice. Luckily, your Sensei gives a summary at the end of each sparring match, so you can gauge your ability. If you are concentrating on only a few moves, he'll tell you to expand your options - being predictable ensures defeat in the Budokan!



▼ *Once the basic skills are mastered, thrashing foes becomes second nature.*





▼ *A reject from Karate Kid is your mentor.*



GET A FRIEND ON THE FLOOR

The two-player option allows you to take on a friend on the Free-Spar Mat. Player two has the problem that all the controls are reversed - and it's hardly simple the normal way round! Therefore practicing for both directions is a must. Of course, you've got to make a friend first....



E'TRONIC ARTS

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: MED/HARD
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: N/A
RESPONSIVENESS: GREAT

1-2 PLAYERS

PRESENTATION 86%

Nice opening graphics, and a clear and informative manual help you get started.

GRAPHICS 86%

The fights look superb, as the sprites are very well animated.

SOUND 82%

Stunning effects, and the music is unobtrusive.

PLAYABILITY 85%

Tricky to begin with, but once mastered you'll be hooked!

LASTABILITY 89%

Plenty of opponents to beat, and the game's open-ended nature means that you'll keep on coming back to it.

OVERALL 87%

Tough, addictive and difficult to master. A truly brilliant beat 'em up.

THE DECEMBER COMPETITION



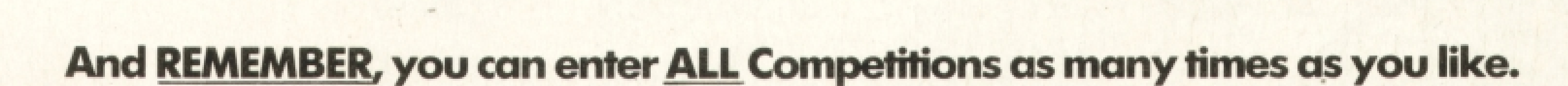
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REVIEW

RAM

"Da war's over fa me - I ain't gonna fight no more!" When these words come from Rambo, you can bet your bottom dollar that extreme violence is about to be committed. This game casts you as the mumbling monosyllabic maestro of murder and mayhem, entering Afghanistan to rescue his chum Colonel Trautman, and killing the entire Soviet army as an afterthought.

Of course, it would be ridiculous to think that an unarmed man could do all this - so Rambo is tooled up with the latest in military hardware. This amounts to a machine gun, knife, and bow. These are selectable during each multidirectionally scrolling level, as are the time bombs that you need to blow up trucks and other sundry enemy emplacements.

The five levels are shown from an overhead viewpoint, but between some levels is a 3D shoot-out, pitting Rambo against a large piece of enemy artillery, such as a helicopter and tank, similar to Operation Wolf.

Non-stop genocide is guaranteed, so start practicing those grunts and build up that body count!

▼ *Tanks? Pah! I've got a knife!*

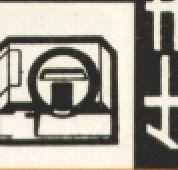


▲ *Shooting generators causes a massive fireball*

TRAUT FISHING

After entering the enemy base, Rambo must search for Trautman and other GIs, set them free, and escape - before the alarm goes off! Using your knife on the guards is the best way to keep alive, but sometimes you'll need to use arrows. The time limit's very strict, so don't hang around.







...BO III

▼ *The helicopters come under a hail of death-dealing shots.*







Searching for a shirt shop. ▶



▲ *A fair fight? Nope, the tank doesn't stand a chance.*



▲ *The first level - the gun emplacement must be blown up repeatedly with bombs or bullets.*

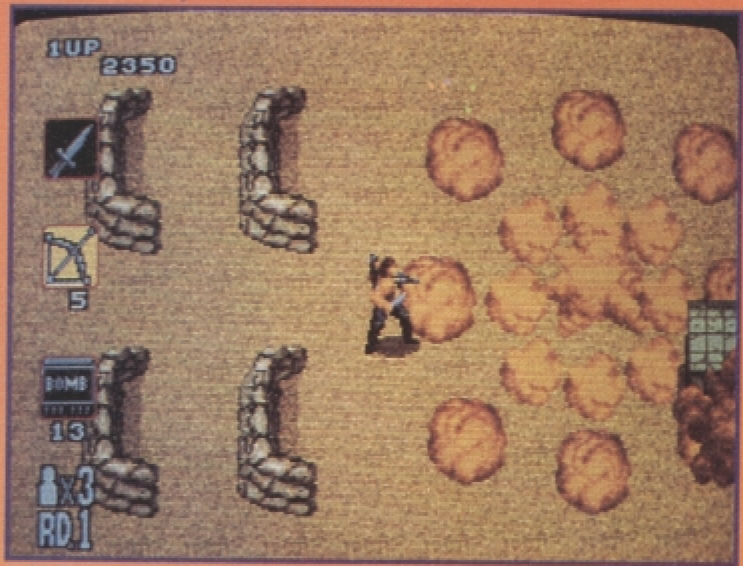
COMMENT

MATT

Not being a huge fan of the jingoistic films, I wasn't expecting much from this game. Although it's not stunning, it's not bad either. I found it in parts similar to Ikari Warriors or even Commando, with its eight-way scrolling and blobby bullets. The additional stages - like the helicopter attack - add a great deal to the game, and the intro screens are excellent. The difficulty is pitched just about right, and I was impressed by the general feel of the game. It takes a while to learn how to use the different weapons, but once you've mastered them you'll be stompin' Commie ass all over the shop!



▲ *Your explosive arrow hits the mark....*



▲ *....with devastating effect.*





▼ *Stab the baddies for extra points*

RAMBO TAKE A BOW

The sub-section with the helicopter is the most visually impressive part of the game. As the chopper hovers in front of Rambo, he must charge up his bow (by holding down the fire button) and then unleash the explosive missile and use the crosshairs to aim at the target. If he doesn't hit first time, he can duck behind the rocks to avoid the volley of rockets from the chopper. But try not to miss, eh!

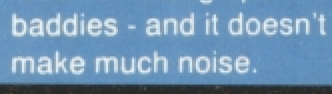
SLY AT THE FLICKS

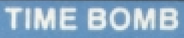


The Rambo film trilogy started off with First Blood, a fairly intelligent look at the way American society had treated Vietnam veterans. Things took a turn for the silly with the release of Rambo - First Blood II, which had our hero taking on the entire Vietnamese army single handedly: he wins, of course, and frees American MIA's (Missing In Action) and expresses his deep annoyance of the American government bureaucracy at the same time. The third film, Rambo III, has the noncommunicative killer invading Afghanistan, again on his own. This film was thought by the American public to be warlike and out of date - after all, the USSR had pulled out of the country by then - and it was not a great success. We're sure Genghis Khan would have approved, though!

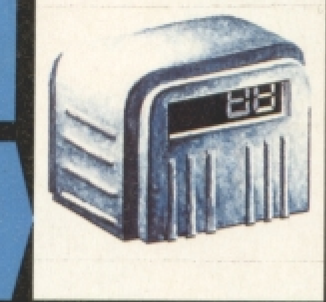
DEATH-DEALIN' WEAPONS





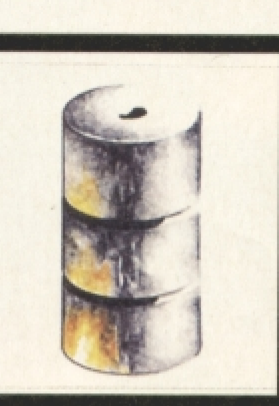


SURVIVAL KNIFE
Ideal for slicing open baddies - and it doesn't make much noise.

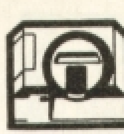


TIME BOMB
Prime 'em, drop 'em, run away and watch people explode.

EXPLODING ARROWS
Keep the fire button pressed for maximum tension and let them rip.



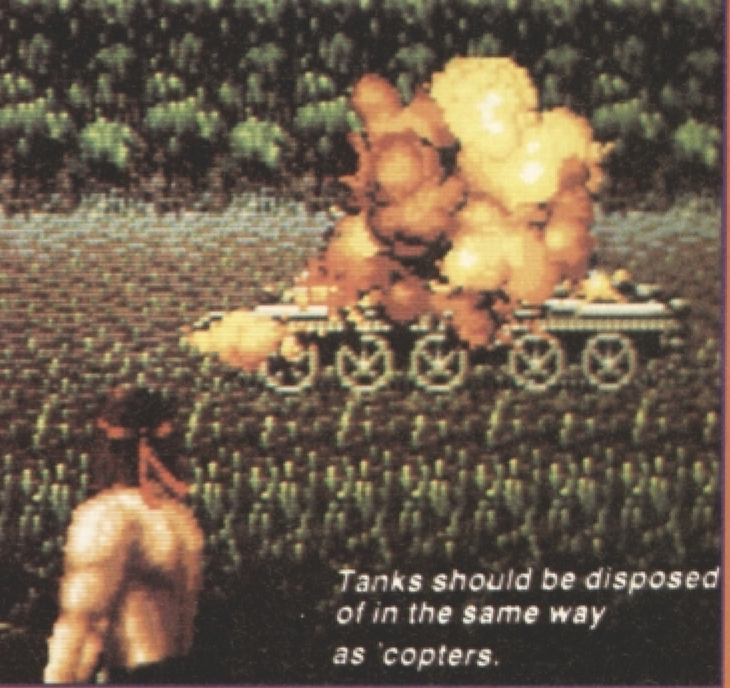
FUEL DRUM
Fire exploding arrows at this to cause a huge fireball.

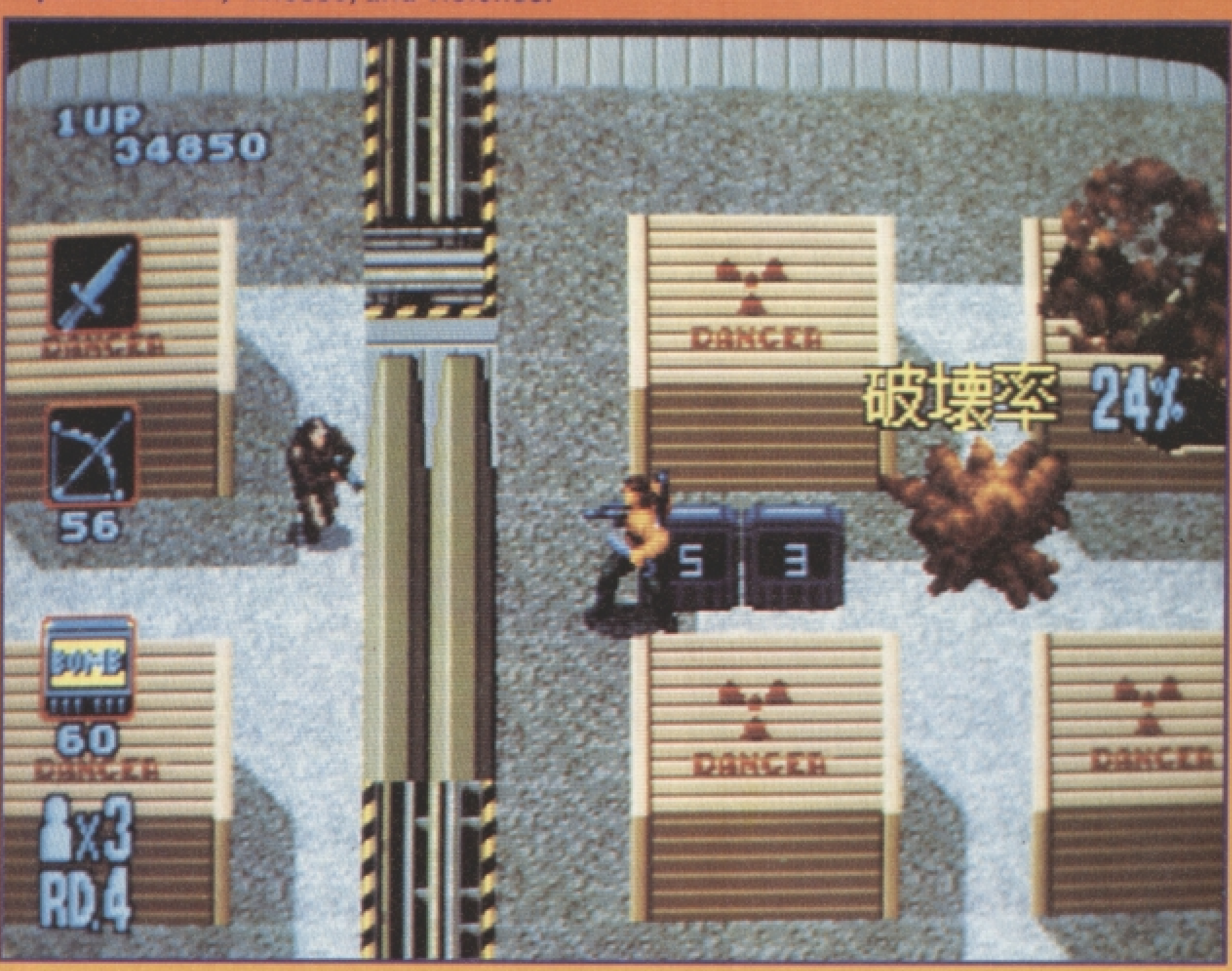




▲ Bridge that gap - with a big bang.


▲ Searching for captives requires stealth, finesse, and violence.


Tanks should be disposed of in the same way as 'copters.



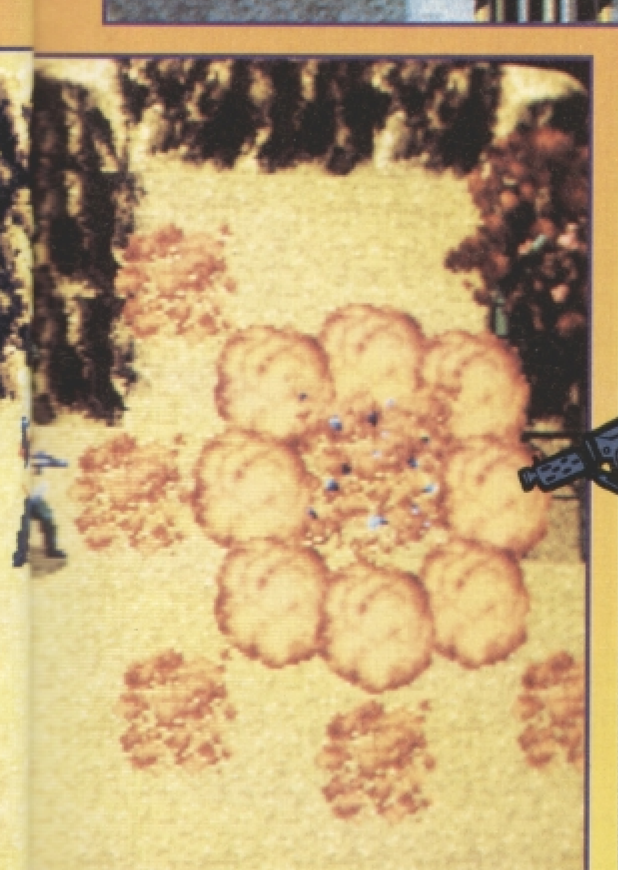
▲ Plant the bombs, walk away, and watch the fun.

COMMENT



JULIAN

Rambo III features loads of dead bodies, tons of explosions and no dialogue - just like the film in fact! The main sprite is suitably Ramboesque, and the backgrounds and other sprites are excellent. The music and crunchy sound effects are also of a very high standard - especially on level two (plug in your headphones and listen that amazing background music). The game itself isn't too difficult, and most players should be able to complete it within a week or so. Fortunately there are multiple difficulty levels to make the game more challenging and give a little more lasting appeal. Well worth a look if you're into military shoot 'em ups - or as Rambo would say, "mmgh rbll mrsh frbsh".



RAMBO III

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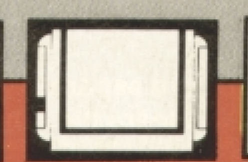


BY: SEGA

PRICE: £29.99

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY/MED
LIVES: 1-5
CONTINUES: 2
SKILL LEVELS: 4
RESPONSIVENESS: QUICK

1-2 PLAYERS




PRESENTATION 88%

Some excellent intro sequences, and sound test and multiple skill options.

GRAPHICS 84%

Backgrounds and sprites of a very high standard, especially the helicopter attack!

SOUND 88%

Unusual and atmospheric tunes and excellent effects that add a great deal to the game.

PLAYABILITY 86%

Once you've got through the tricky first level, the game is fairly straightforward.

LASTABILITY 83%

It's not difficult to finish, but beating the game on all skill levels will take quite some doing!

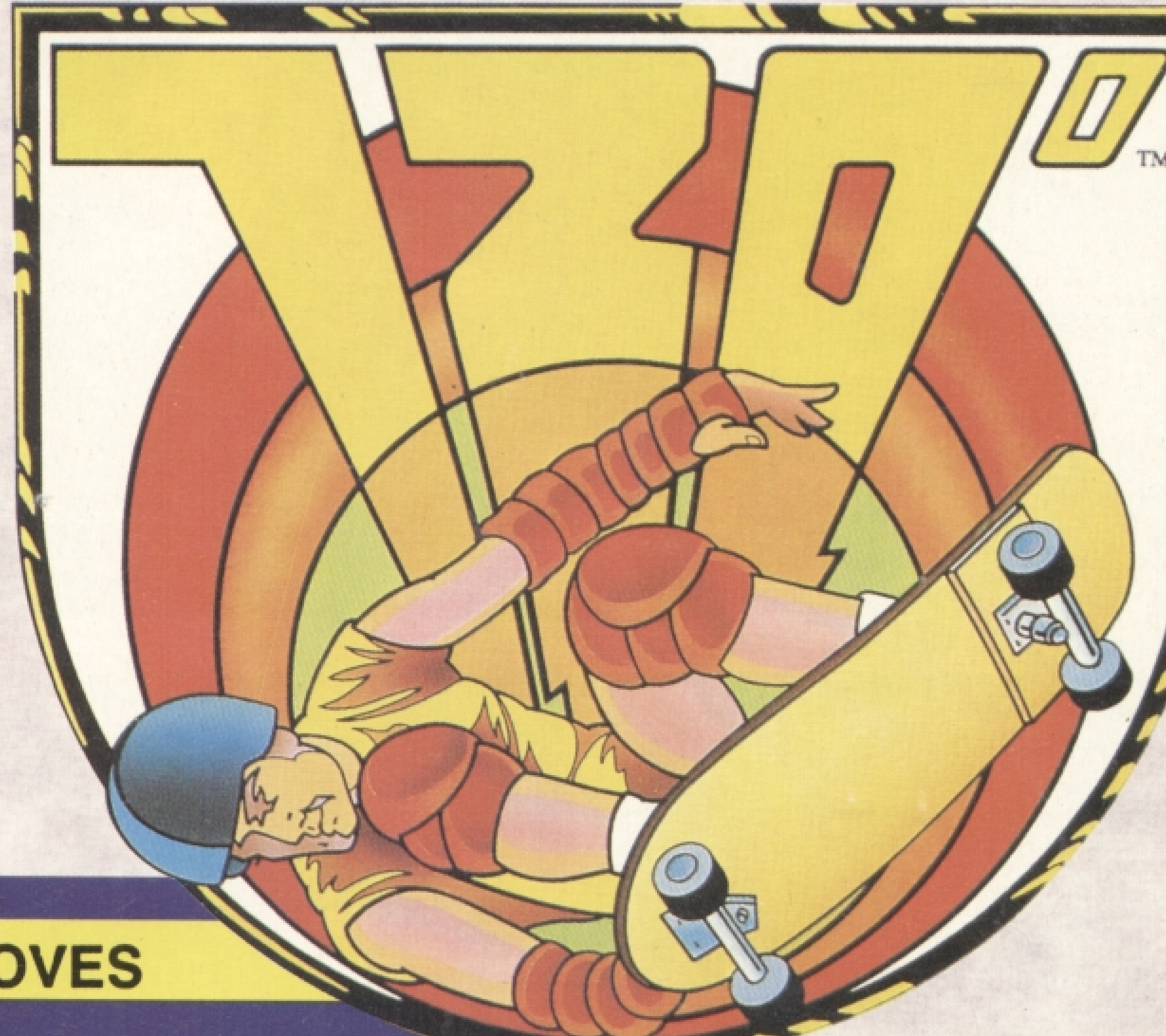
OVERALL 86%

All the fun and frolics of an abattoir with plenty of exciting and addictive action.

Here's another skateboarding game on the Nintendo - but totally different to Skate or Die. It's a conversion of the old Atari coin-op and is centered around city streets and sidewalks littered with ramps, water hazards, and deadly traffic.

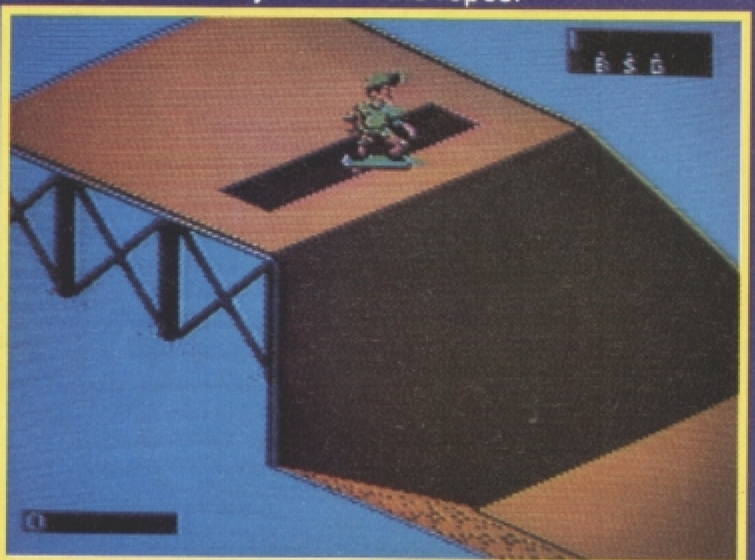
Surrounding the streets are booths corresponding to the four events you must compete in - slalom, jump, downhill, and ramp. Your success in these events is rewarded by bronze, silver, or gold medals - but if you're complete rubbish you won't get anything! Also, you get cash for winning medals, which is used to buy better pads, a boards, shoes and helmets. The better your gear, the better your on-screen personna performs. On completion of all four events, you progress to the next, more difficult level.

Of course there's a fly in the ointment - in this case, literally! There's a fixed time limit between events, and when it's elapsed a swarm of bees starts chasing you - get to the next booth quickly, or it's curtains!

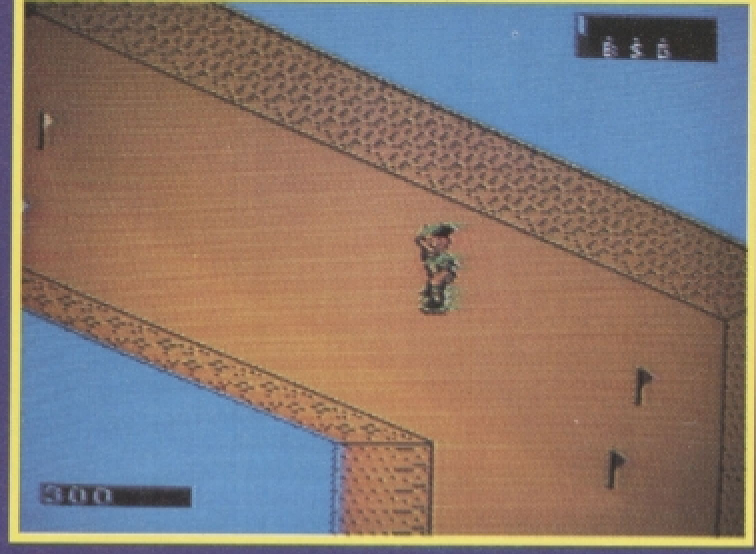


FOUR FANCY MOVES

The four events require separate skills to finish. Practice makes perfect, but you're bound to have a few wipe-outs as you learn the ropes.



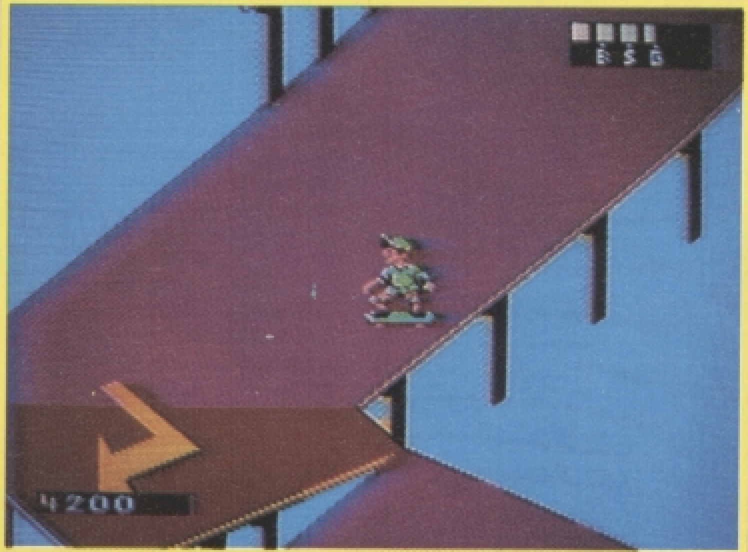
JUMP: Look out for the diamond, which is the optimum place from which to jump. Make sure you avoid the water on the way down!



SLALOM: No fancy moves required here, just fast turns to get between the poles. Learning the route is helpful.



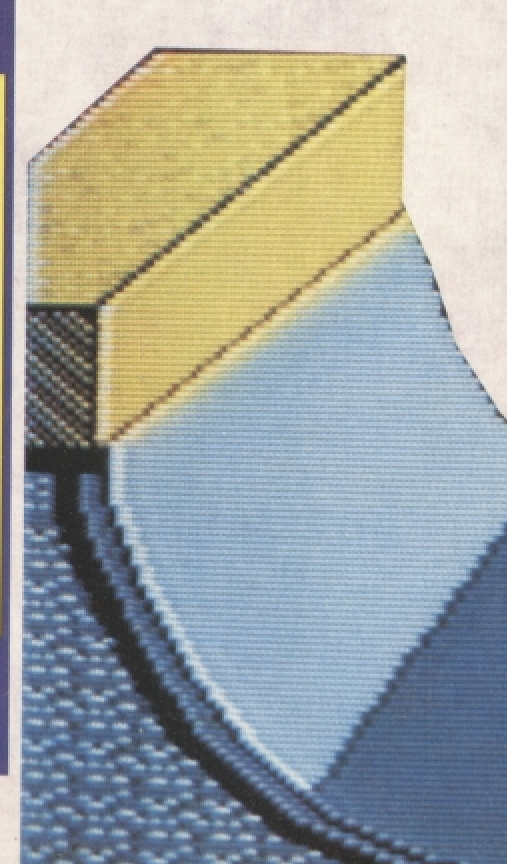
RAMP: The hardest event to get right. Wait until you're at the top of your swoop before trying a stunt

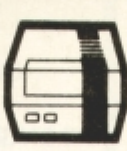


DOWNHILL: Turning in mid air helps to give you a smooth landing. As with the slalom, knowing the course is very useful.

THE ORIGINAL COIN-OP

Atari's 720 coin-op is quite a head-turner! Mounted on the top of the machine is what looks like a giant ghetto blaster, complete with a pair of enormous speakers. Once you start playing the game, the reason for these sonic devices instantly becomes apparent - the game features a variety of very loud stereo thrash metal tunes which barrage the player as he skates around the screen!







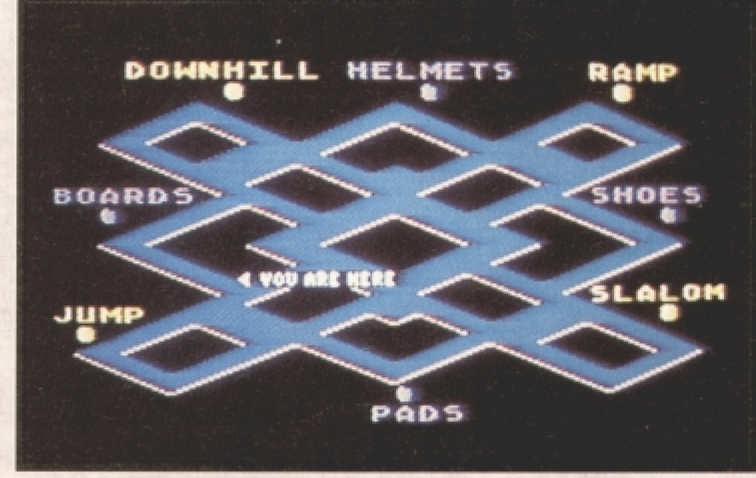
COMMENT



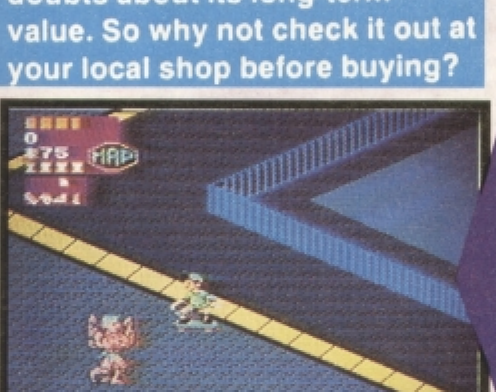
MATT

I think this game is a lot of fun - although you're supposed to compete in the events, it's just as much fun skating around the streets doing stunts and hassling pedestrians! Unfortunately, the swarm of bees soon puts an end to this. Anyway, the events themselves are a little disappointing, as they don't change a great deal between levels. So although the game is great fun, I have my doubts about its long-term value. So why not check it out at your local shop before buying?

▲ *The end-of-level screen. Once all four events are finished, you progress to the next stage.*



▲ *Access the map to learn the best route.*



SUBURBAN NIGHTMARE

Do the locals let you enjoy a quick skate? Do they heck! Cars attempt to mow you down as soon as you stray on to the road, idiots hurl frisbees right into your path, and musclebound morons flex their pecs and generally get in the way. Evasive action is needed to avoid death at the hands of your homicidal neighbours!

COMMENT



JULIAN

Although this only has four events, they combine together to produce an entertaining game. Skating from one part of the park to another is a augh, because you can do stunts and knock people over on the way, and there are also shops where you can stop and upgrade your gear to give you better abilities (so long as you keep winning the cash). The game isn't difficult to get into, but once you get to higher levels, it becomes very tough indeed, with the bees swarming after you at very high speed - you have to plan ahead and skate like mad to get to the next event before they catch you! 720 is an entertaining and original game, and is well worth trying out if you're after something other than a shoot 'em up or platform game.



▲ *Shops are great sources of upgraded equipment.*

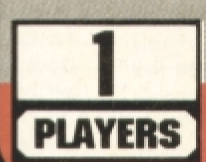


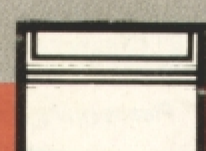


BY: MINDSCAPE

PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD







PRESENTATION 68%

Very simple and straightforward, with nothing in the way of game options.

GRAPHICS 84%

Although they're nothing special to look at, the graphics suit the game well.

SOUND 80%

A vague attempt at thrash metal - and it nearly works!

PLAYABILITY 85%

Highly playable with that no-nonsense addictive quality!

LASTABILITY 76%

It gets tough on later levels, but there's not much variety in the action.

OVERALL 80%

A solid, playable number that lacks the variety to make it a real winner.

PC Engine



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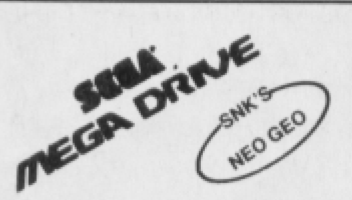
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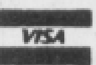
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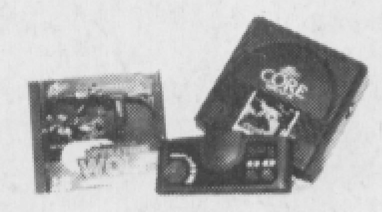
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ZANY GOLF

Golf is a game of skill, practiced by such idols and role models as Jimmy Tarbuck and Bruce Forsyth. Luckily this game has nothing to do with Country Clubs and acres of land with sandpits, but the variety known as Crazy Golf. This involves knocking the ball around bizarre courses, which are represented in this game. Windmills, burgers, castles and even pinball tables make an appearance in the 16 "holes" that comprise the challenge.

Although only part of the course is shown at once, scrolling the cursor allows the whole hole (groan) to be seen. By placing the cursor on the ball, holding down the button and pulling back, the ball is hit in a similar way to drawing an arrow in a bow.

As in "real" golf, each hole has to be completed in a certain number of strokes. If, however, a round is finished in under the limit, extra strokes are awarded for the next hole.



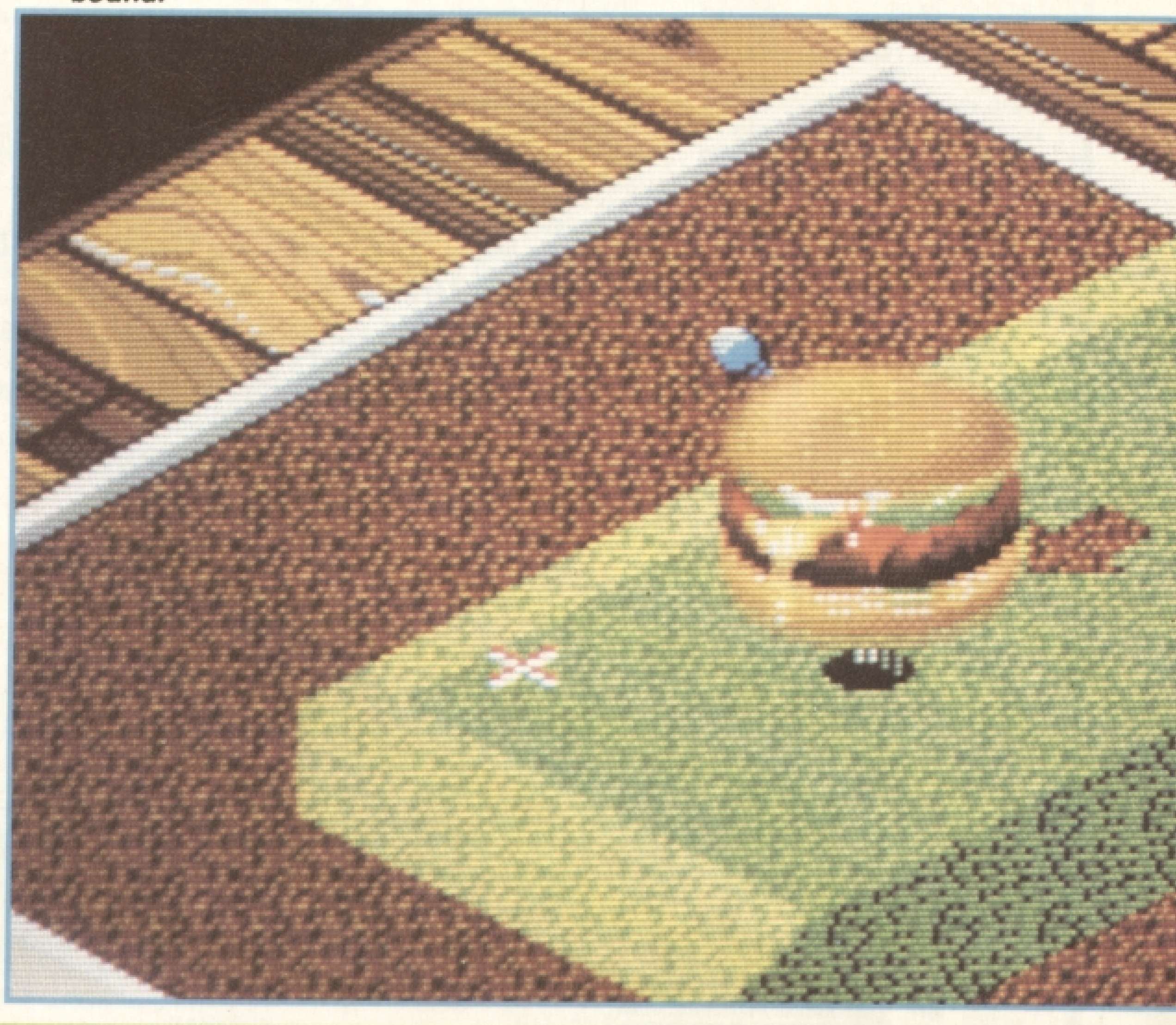
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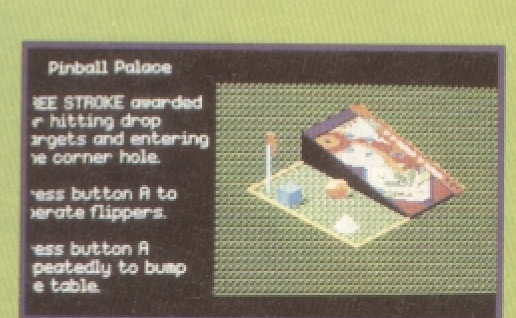
Many years ago, before the last ice-age, I went on a holiday to Majorca with some mateys. A Crazy Golf tournament was held to the wonderment of all (although I lost a fortune on the side bets!). Anyway, this sport has a special place in my heart (ahh) as a result, and I was thrilled to see the game on the Megadrive. It's a great game, with fun courses and a very accurate ball movement. It can be annoying to be sent right back to the first level, but this helps to stop the game from being too easy. It's best when played with others, making it more of a competition. Recommended.

▼ *Bouncy burgers are bound to break the ball's bound.*





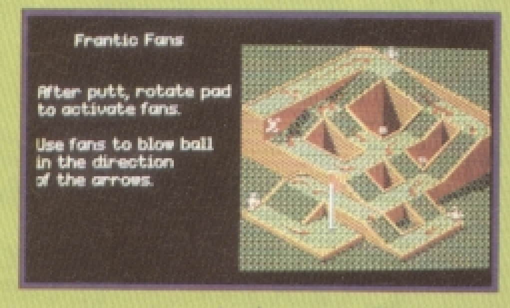
▲ *The first hole - make use of the windmill.*



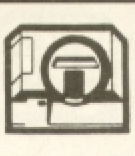
▲ *The pinball table helps to gain free strokes.*



▲ *Slopes can cause problems.*

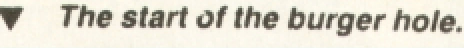


▲ *Put the wind up on this course*

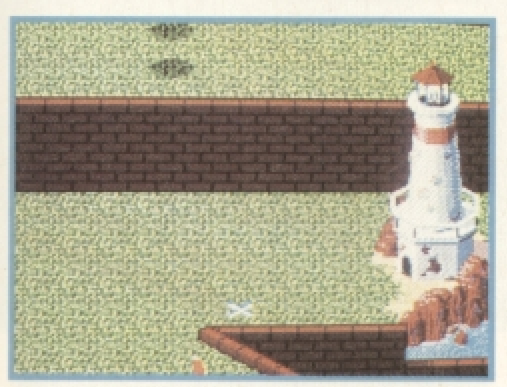




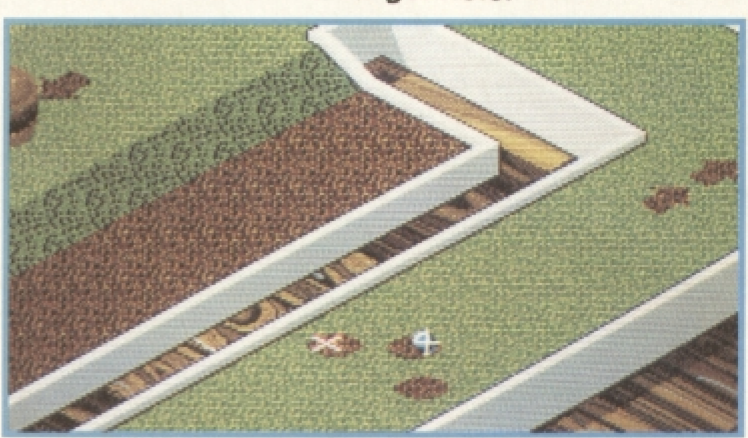
▲ *Use the fan to blow your balls.*



▼ *The start of the burger hole.*



▲ *Through the windmill, round the corner.*



TOMMY GOES ZANY

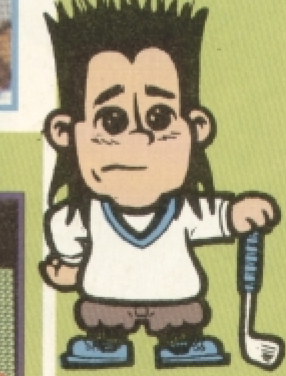
The wacky third round features, of all things, a pinball table complete with flippers and bumpers. The idea is to knock the ball into the table then use the flippers to gain extra strokes. It's not easy, but perseverance reaps rewards - the holes get much harder later on, and any extra strokes come in very handy indeed!





▲ *The walls rise and fall, so timing's tricky!*

COMMENT



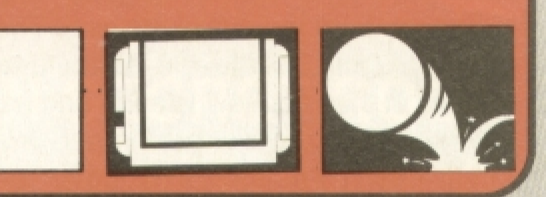
JULIAN

Zany Golf is a great simulation of the strange sea-side golfing game, with all sorts of amazing obstacles to get the ball through. I particularly like the pinball screen and the multi-track green with high-powered fans which blow the ball around! The graphics and sound are both excellent, and it's amazingly addictive when you first start playing. However, the fact that there are only 16 screens makes me question its lasting appeal. Zany Golf is certainly great fun - but if you buy it, don't expect to be playing it in a month's time.



BY: TRONIC ARTS
PRICE: £34.99

RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: N/A
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD



PRESENTATION 82%

Once finished this will have little to recommend it - but it's one that your parents will love to play.

GRAPHICS 78%

Nothing too flashy, but shows the wacky nature of the game.

SOUND 70%

Good fun, but the scrolling can be a little bizarre. Ball movement is superb though.

PLAYABILITY 82%

Pretty basic effects with hummable ditties to add to the loopy gameplay!

LASTABILITY 68%

Easy to control and has great potential as a multi-player game.

OVERALL 74%

Zany's the name and zany's the game! A great idea that hasn't quite got enough levels to make it outstanding.

▼ *Red pots give double or triple rainbows!*

Bub and Bob are heroes! After rescuing their girlfriends from the evil clutches of The Boss of Shadow in Bubble Bobble, the lads returned to their home town in the Rainbow Islands and as the Japanese scenario puts it, got "Super-Drunk". The aftermath wasn't a near-fatal hangover as we might expect, but now the bubble blowing dinosaurs have changed back into human form.

But the lads' celebrations are short-lived. The evil Boss of Shadow has returned to enslave the Rainbow Islands and their inhabitants, and not only are our heroes trapped amongst this carnage but the Islands are sinking as well! But there is one hope. If seven huge crystals are collected the Rainbow Islands and their inhabitants will return to normal, and why not give that Boss of Shadow something to think about at the same time?

Our heroes have one cunning trick up their sleeves. Their parents gave them the magic of the Rainbow, which generally means they can sling rainbows anywhere they want and jolly useful they are too. But the Boss of Shadow has to be stopped - and quick, so it's a case of scaling all four vertically scrolling levels of all seven islands, dealing rainbow death to any minions or end-of-island guardians that stand in the way.

▲ *Rainbows-a-rama at Toy Island.*



▲ *Meeting the Mother Spider at the end of round four.*







TWO FOR ONE

Not only does this Megadrive conversion feature an almost perfect copy of the original Rainbow Islands, it also features Super Rainbow Islands, a much harder version of the original game with different baddies. So when you've got good at the first version, the second will challenge you further!



▲ Complete each level before the island sinks!

▲ Collect the treasures at the end of each round.

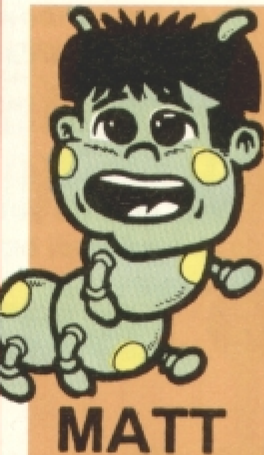


▲ Hitting a magci star has a smart bomb effect.

GREY IMPORT WARNING

At present Rainbow Islands is only available from Megadrive software importers and is NOT officially available from Sega in this country. This means that the game will work fine on Megadrives that have been imported from Japan, but will not work on official UK Megadrives unless you have a Japanese games adaptor (available from mail order import companies) or your machine has been modified (which we do not recommend you do as this invalidates your warranty).

COMMENT

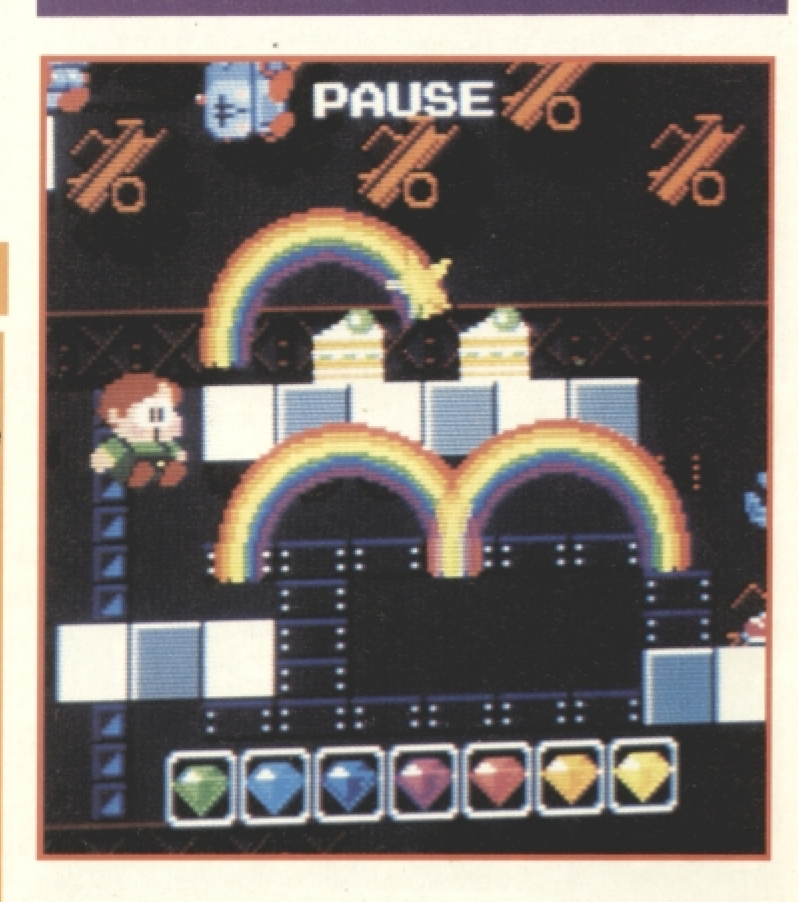


MATT

Brilliant! Two damn close versions of the classic coin-op for the price of one! Rainbow Islands has all the features of the coin-op and some more besides. The playability that made the arcade version so good has made its way in copious quantities to this fabulous Megadrive game, including all the secret rooms and bonuses! My only gripe is that the sprites are incredibly flickery at times, especially when loads of rainbows are on screen. Rainbow Islands is still an essential purchase. If you've got an imported machine, do not avoid this at any cost!

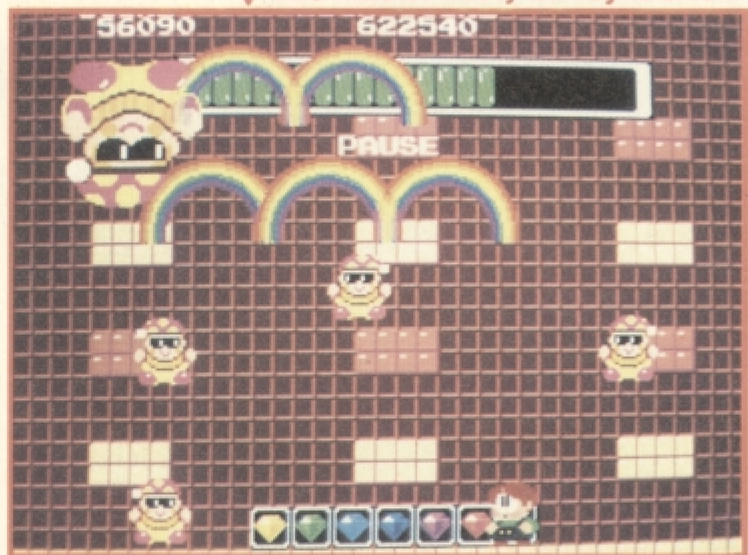
SEVEN SECRET ROOMS

Bub has a tendency to lose all his power-ups if he dies, unless you collect the special power-ups in the secret rooms. The path to entering these rooms (there's one at the end of each island) couldn't be simpler(!). Simply collect all of the crystals from left to right - IN ORDER, to reveal the secret door. The screen is divided, from left to right, into seven different strips. The colour of the jewel you receive after crashing a rainbow on a baddie is determined by which strip the vanquished nasty lands in. Purple for the far right, and orange for the far left.



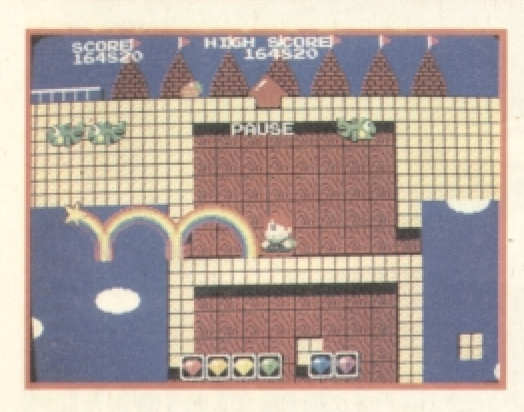
▲ Crash the rainbows to collect the goodies.

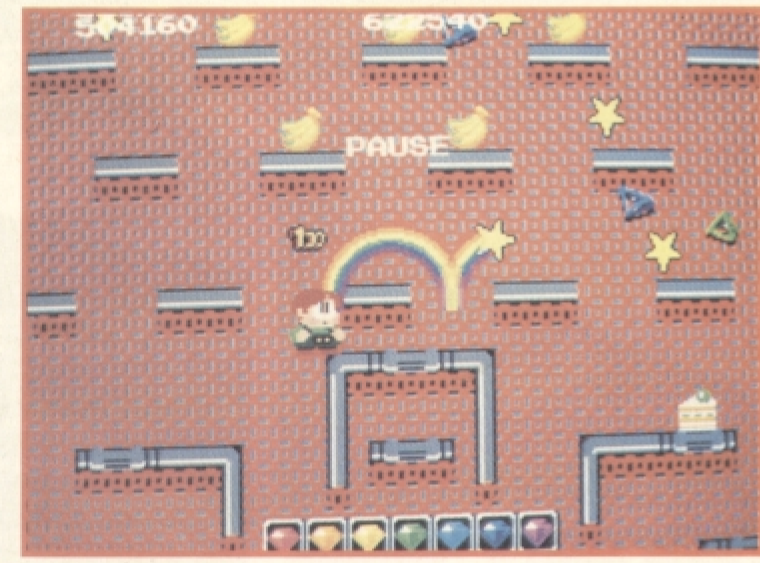
The master nasty of Toy Island...



POTS O' POWER-UPS

There are a huge amount of power-ups on offer in Rainbow Islands. Red pots are collected to give Bub an extra rainbow to fire (up to three can be collected), whilst yellow pots speed up the rate at which rainbows can be created. Training shoes generally speed the lucky hero up a tad - just the business for avoiding some of the Boss of Shadow's more evil minions. Shields and various other "cutey" power-ups (like fairies) are also available as you progress through the game.

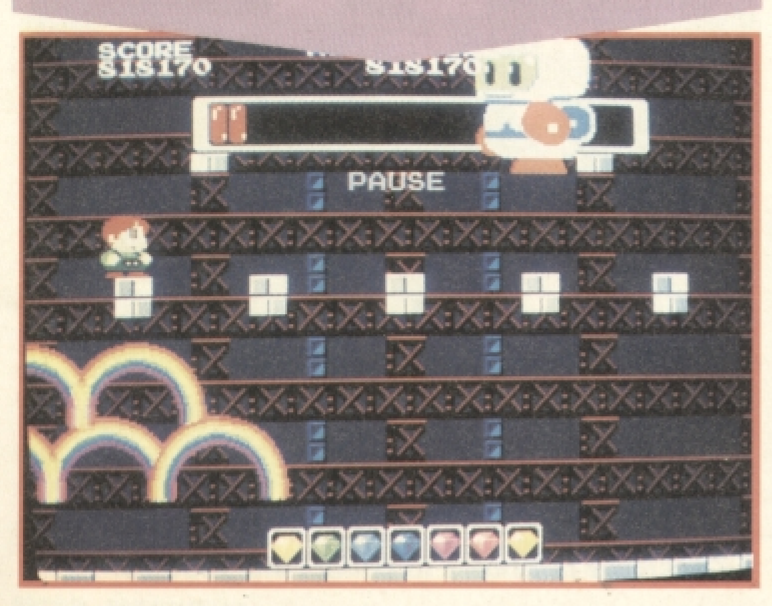




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PAINT THE WHOLE WORLD WITH A RAINBOW

None of this Zippy or Bungle rubbish in this game. Instead, our heroes can fire off one, two, or three rainbows at once, depending on the amount of power-ups collected. Rainbows are also useful tools for collecting any items left around, or for crashing onto the meanies' heads for extra points! The rainbows best use, however, is for creating temporary platforms that Bub (or Bob) can climb and jump from. Beware though, the magic fades after a while!



COMMENT



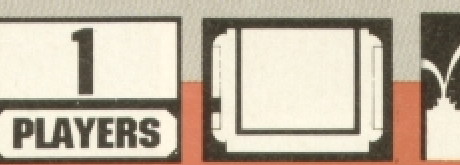
JULIAN

Here's *another* classy Megadrive conversion! It's virtually identical to the original coin-op, with super graphics, an amazingly catchy tune to keep you humming while you play and very, very addictive gameplay. There are three skill levels, but to be honest you're better off playing on the normal level. "Easy" really is very easy and lets you finish the game far too quickly, which ruins the enjoyment somewhat. I love the idea of having Super Rainbow Islands included in the package as it adds enormously to the lasting appeal. With all its amazing secret bonuses, Rainbow Islands isn't a game you'll tire of quickly. An absolute must for import owners.



BY: TAITO
PRICE: £40.00
RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 3-7
CONTINUES: 10
SKILL LEVELS: 3
RESPONSIVENESS: SUPER

1 PLAYERS



PRESENTATION 92%
All the cute coin-op presentation screens, along with loads of options and the choice of which version of the coin-op to play!

GRAPHICS 89%
A bit different to the coin-op in its choice of colours,

SOUND 83%
That "re-mix" of Somewhere Over The Rainbow is still there, and pretty jazzy it is too!

PLAYABILITY 93%
All the rainbow-slinging, platform jumping fun of the arcade!

LASTABILITY 90%
Not only do you get the "extra" version of the coin-op, but there's a choice of difficulty levels

OVERALL 92%
A totally fabulous rendition of a classic coin-op that simply must be purchased!

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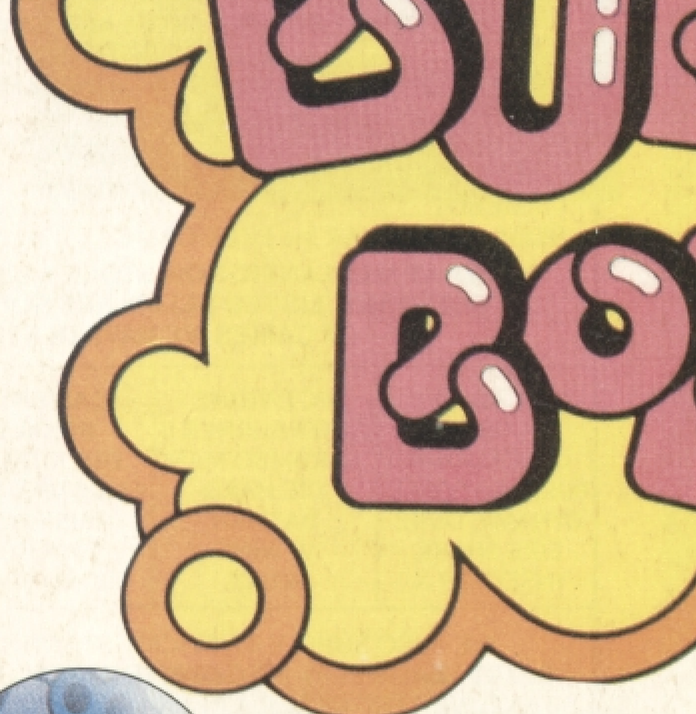
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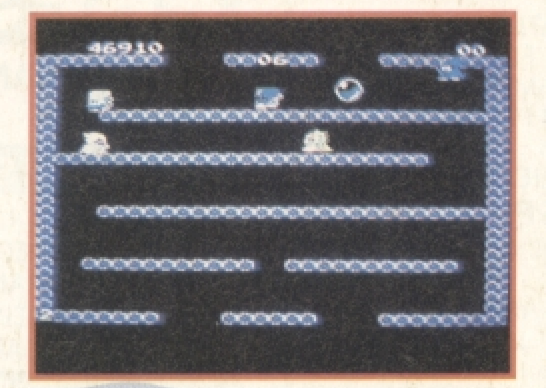


It's not an easy life, y'know. Take Bub and Bob, for example. One minute, they're their normal selves, the next they're bubble-blowing dinosaurs! Who could have performed this dastardly deed? Only the not-very-nice Baron von Blubba, that's who. To regain their human forms, the two dayglo dinos have to travel through 100 levels of madcap platform action, then confront and destroy the Baron himself!

This is by no means an easy task, though, as the Baron has his hordes of minions waiting to dispose of any bronto that might get too big for its bubbles, and each has its own way of dishing out the devastation.

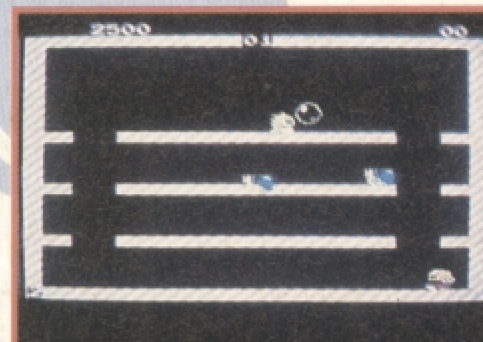
The bad guys don't have it all their own way, however - they can be blatted by blowing a bubble at 'em, then butting the bubbled beastie (try saying that after a few barrels of Old Flatulence Bitter)!

As the dinos progress through the game, the screens get tougher and tougher, and the enemies increase in speed and intelligence. So you'd better give your bubble-fingers a work-out!



▲ Burst the water bubbles.

▼ Two down, one to go!



BUBBLING OVER

Baron von Blubba has foolishly left a variety of items scattered around each of the levels, which bestow the two brontos with special abilities:



BUBBLEGUM: Either longer lasting, long range or faster, short range bubbles which allow Bub or Bob to blast baddies better (!).

TEAPOT: Gives "Super Bubble Up", an instant version of all bubblegum power-ups.



UMBRELLA: Teleports one or both players several levels. Handy on sticky levels that would otherwise be nigh-on impossible to complete.

WATER BUBBLE: Burst this to give you a water-ride you won't forget in a hurry - and it takes out baddies, too!

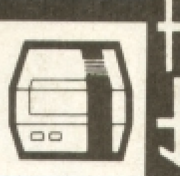


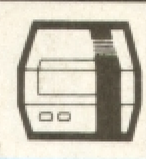
LIGHTNING BUBBLE: When burst, this releases a blast of lightning which flies across the screen. Any baddie that stands in the way gets fried, and turned into a diamond!



▼ Ozone-friendly bubbles?





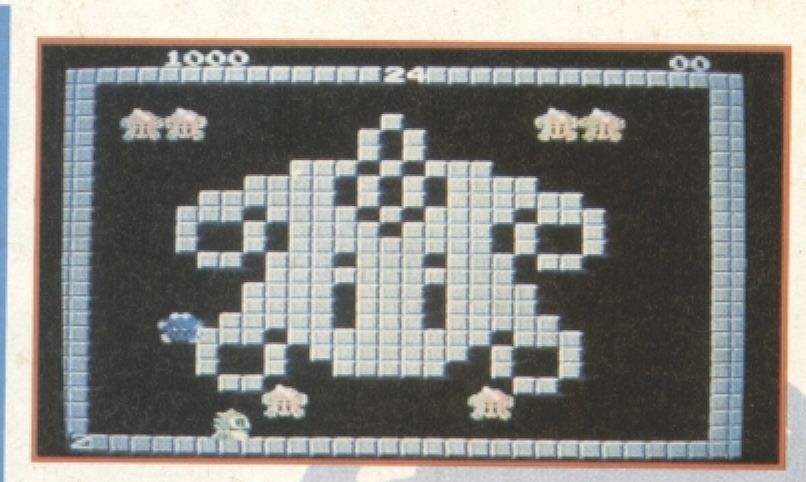


COMMENT



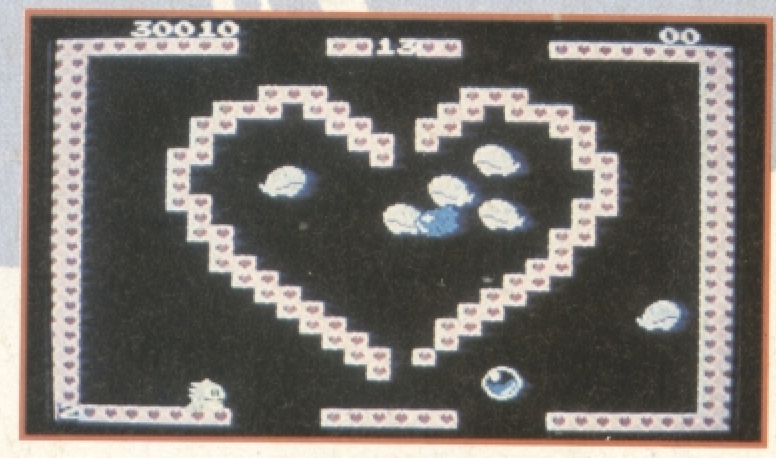
JULIAN

What a weird and wonderful piece of software! It might look all cute and cuddly, but don't be misled - this is one tough game. There are 100 screens to clear, and things start getting hard by level 20! Fortunately there's a password system to let you go back to later levels - but the real challenge (and the way to get big scores) is to go through all the screens in one go! The inclusion of the coin-op's simultaneous two-player option is a real boon, and adds to the overall appeal. With great graphics (although they get a bit flickery when there are loads of bubbles floating around) and one of the catchiest soundtracks I've heard, Bubble Bobble is a thoroughly addictive and enjoyable game which would be a great addition to your software library.

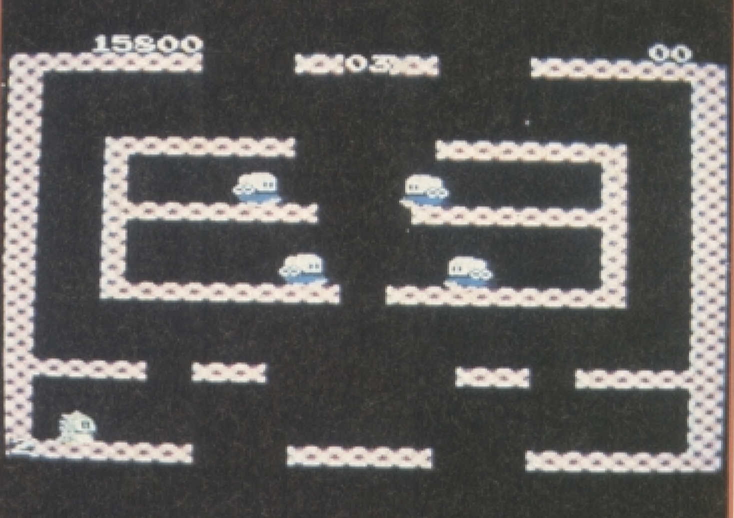


▲ *Loadsa bad guys to blast!*

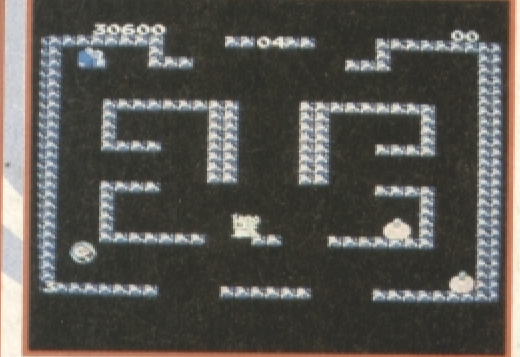
▼ *Now that's a heart attack!*



▼ *He's mean and green, but he's no turtle!*

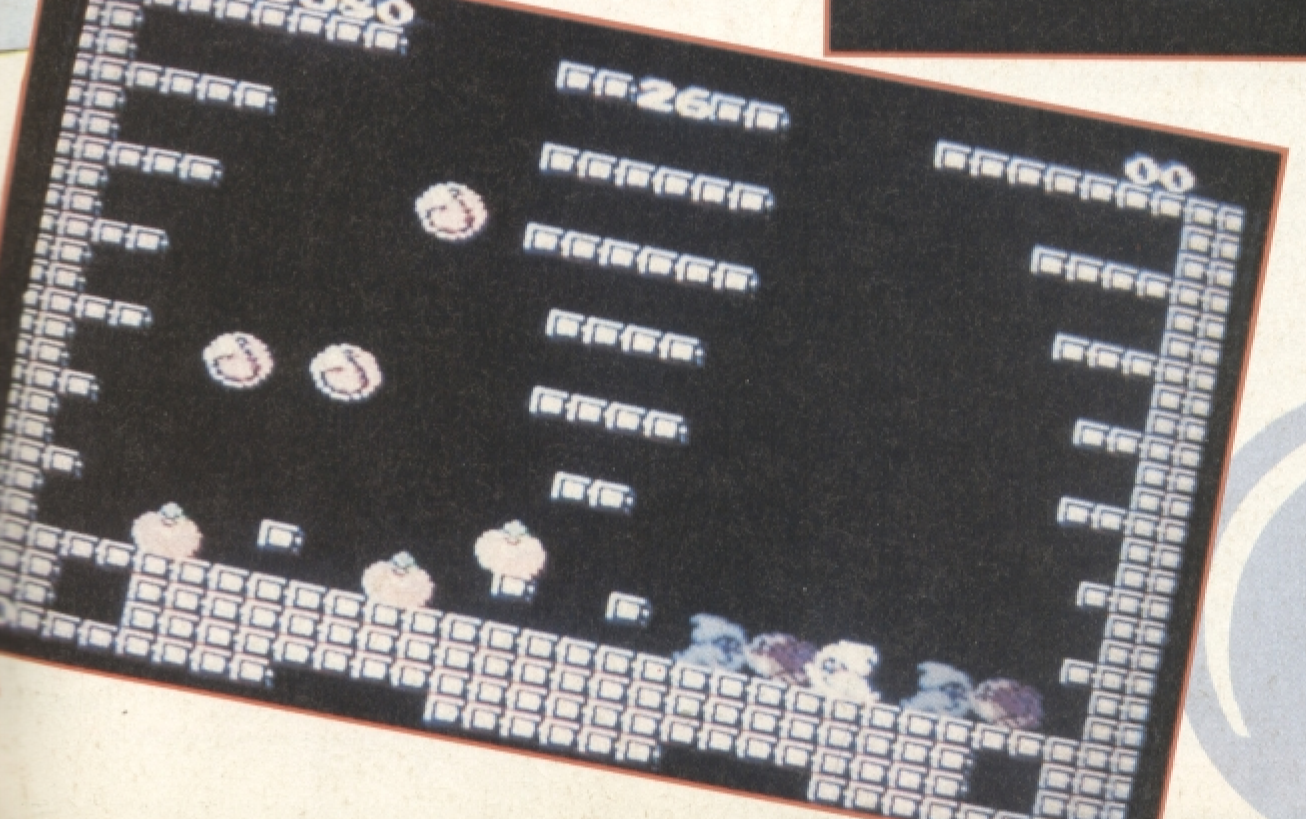


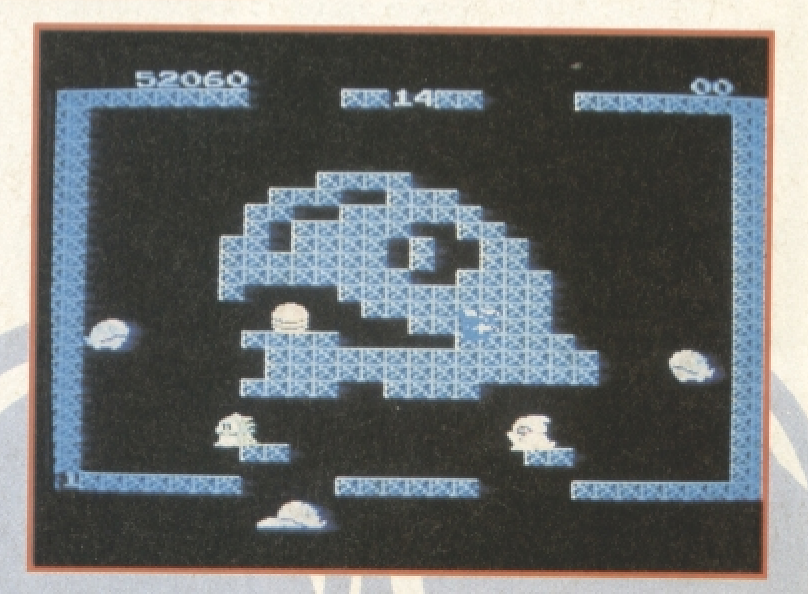
▼ *Butt that baddie!*



▼ *Quick, grab the burger!*

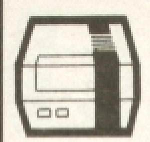
▼ *Don't bumble - bubble!*











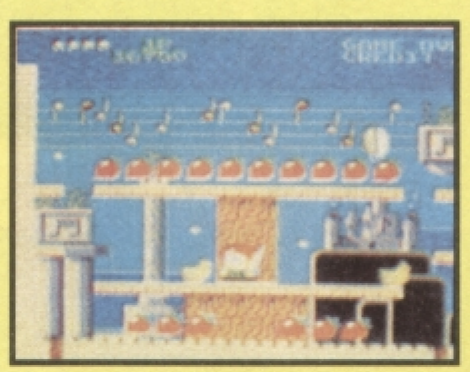
REVIEW

SOMEWHERE OVER THE RAINBOW

It seems that most coin-ops come in a series of three - for example, the Nemesis trilogy - and **Bubble Bobble** is no exception. The first game, from which this is a conversion, received universal acclaim due to its simplicity, non-violent gameplay and horrendously addictive qualities.

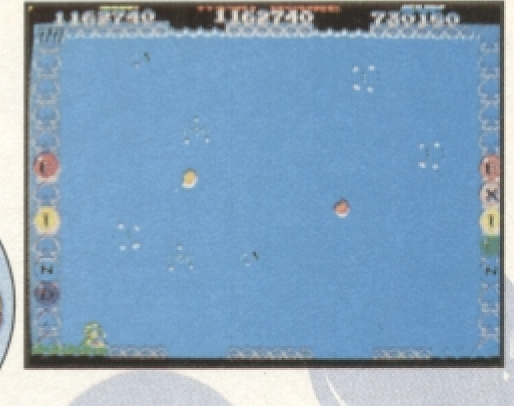


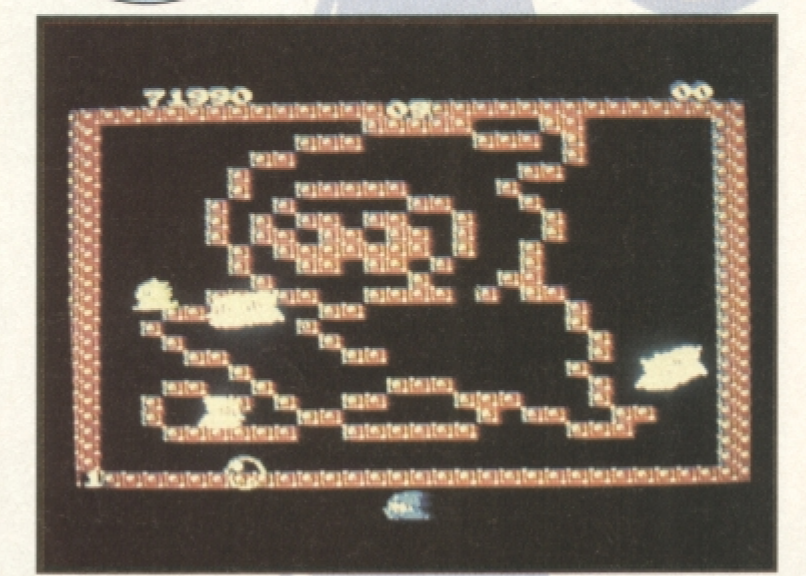
Rainbow Islands surfaced in the arcades during 1988, and put Bub and Bob back in human form - after defeating von Blubba, and getting "Super Drunk" (the Japanese scenario - honest!), the lads returned home, where their parents bestowed them with the gift of rainbow power. Von Blubba had returned, however, and captured the inhabitants of the seven Rainbow Islands, so it was down to the two boys to put paid to the Baron's schemes once and for all. A Megadrive conversion of Rainbow Islands is coming soon - watch out for it!



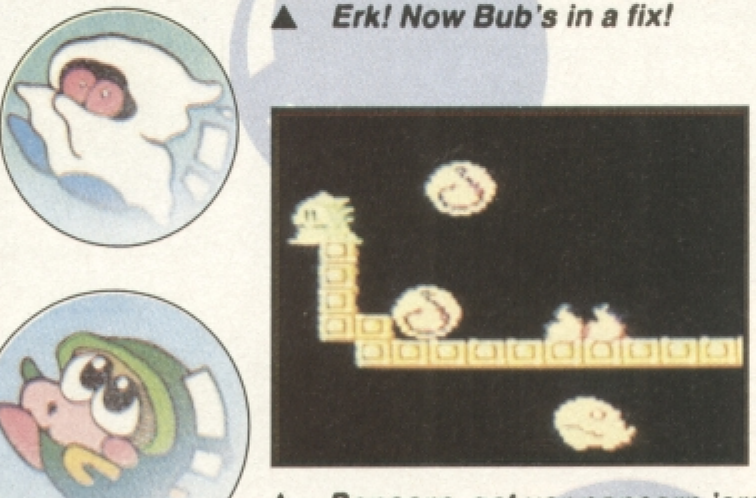
The third part of the saga is **Parasol Stars**, a brand-new coin-op that has only just appeared in British arcades. Once again Von Blubba is up to his evil tricks, and once again Bub and Bob have got to save the day - with their deadly umbrellas! It's another very cute and highly addictive coin-op, and is bound to be a winner! We'll let you know when console versions will appear as soon as we have the info!

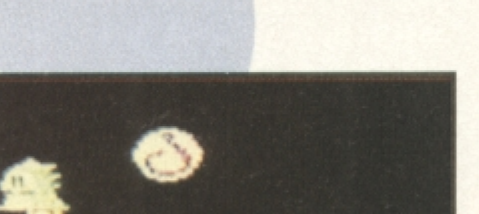


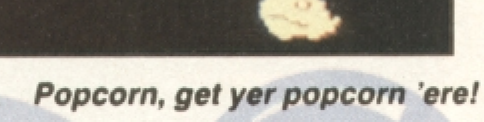




▲ *Erk! Now Bub's in a fix!*

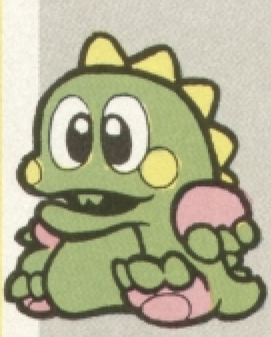






▲ *Popcorn, get yer popcorn 'ere!*

COMMENT



MATT

Bubble Bobble was a real hoot in the arcades, and the computer versions were pretty good, too, but there's something about the NES version - it's too hard! The difficulty level is way too high - but there is a handy password option to leap straight to later screens. The overall playability is weakened by this, but not so much as to put you right off. The graphics are very nice, a bit plain in places, but again, they don't exactly follow the coin-op to the letter, and the sound is a jolly tune which gets a bit annoying after a while. Overall, a fun game which takes a bit of practice getting into, but once you've got it sussed, you'll be stuck to your screens for many an hour.



BY: NINTENDO
PRICE: £24.99
RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: MED/HARD
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: INFINITE
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: GOOD

PRESENTATION 88%
Excellent, with one or simultaneous two-player options and a neat password system.

GRAPHICS 83%
Nice, chunky and colourful, if a bit flickery at times.

SOUND 67%
A cutesy tune that is nice to listen to, and even cuter effects!

PLAYABILITY 80%
Flippin' difficult at first, but almost as much fun as taking a bubble bath.

LASTABILITY 87%
With 100 levels, this is certainly one game that you won't complete overnight!

OVERALL 85%
A very cute and highly addictive arcade conversion that'll keep you playing for ages!

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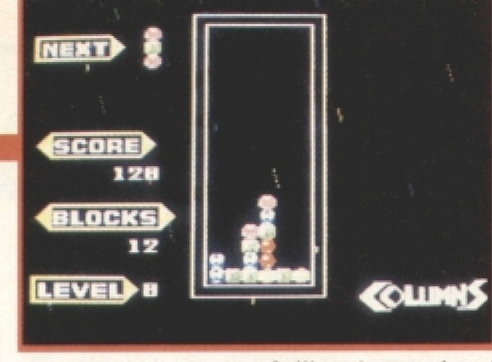
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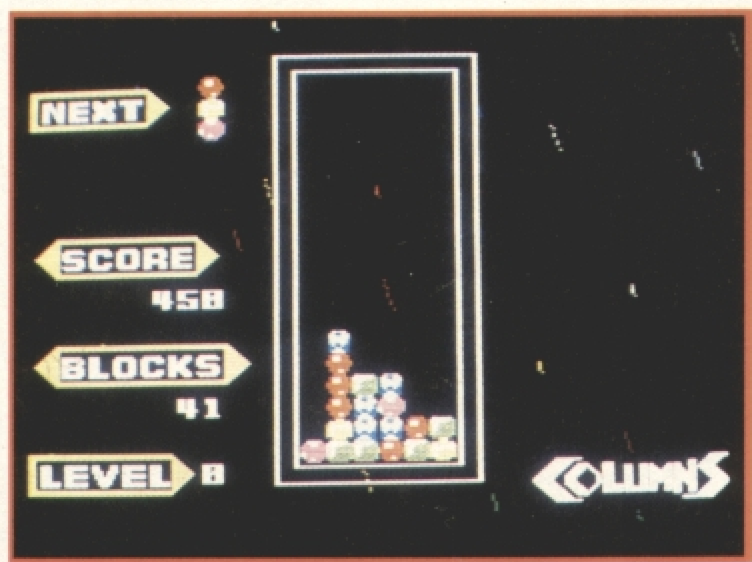
COLUMNS

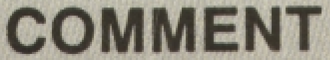
Oh no! Funny-coloured jewels are falling into a box! Okay, so it's not the most exciting scenario ever, but this is a game of the "classic simplicity" type, such as Tetris and Klax.

The jewels descend in assorted blocks of three, the order of which can be changed as they fall down. When a minimum of three jewels of the same colour are placed together, horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, they disappear - and the jewels above fall down to fill the gaps.

The two-player option means that the players take it in turns to lay jewels in the box, meaning that they inadvertently help each other half of the time. Of course, teamwork is important when the screen is nearly full!

Other options let you change the jewels into alternative shapes such as dice or even fruit. All this is set to a tune similar to the Hallowe'en film theme, for added atmosphere.

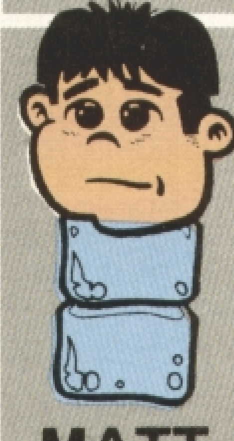



▲ *Hit the road Jack....*

BACKGROUND INFO

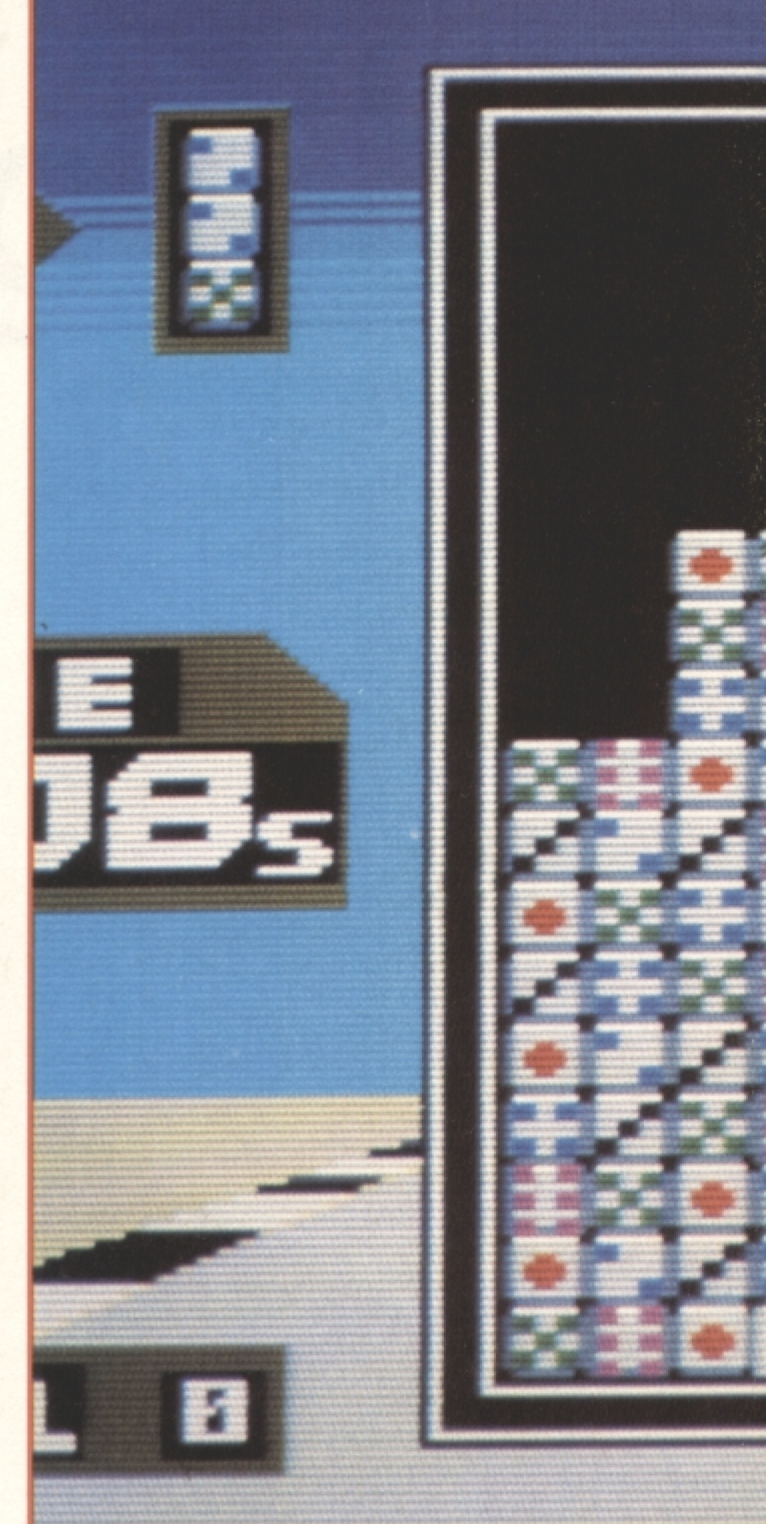
Throughout the game the backgrounds to the screens vary. It can be a view of a road (which scrolls progressively faster as your score increases), or a star field (again, the stars speed up as you advance). Although these effects aren't intrusive, they present an excellent visual treat whilst playing.

COMMENT

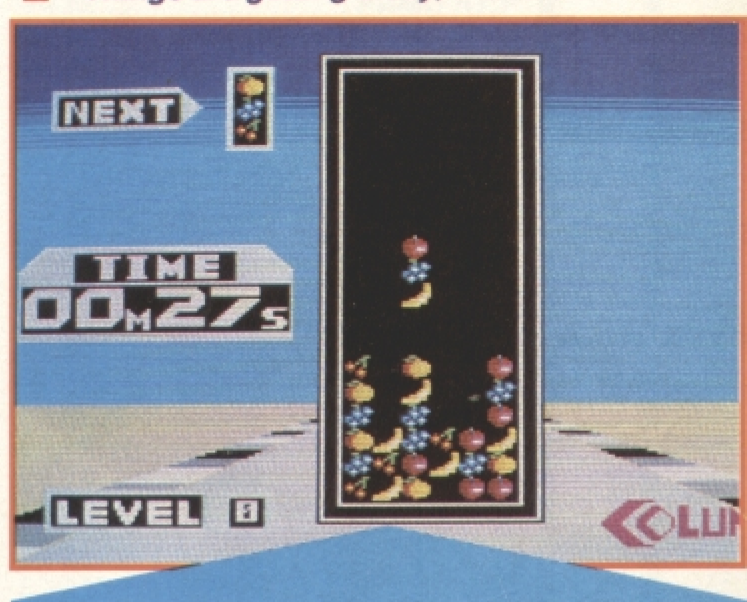


MATT

After playing this game on the Megadrive, I've become a fan: and the Master System version is excellent too. This game manages to be both soothing and completely addictive at the same time! It's easier to get to grips with than Tetris (although not quite as good overall), and offers the sort of challenge that makes me wonder why beat 'em ups are so popular. The music goes a long way to adding atmosphere, and there's nothing as satisfying as watching a carefully-planned chain reaction take place. Make sure Columns has a place in your collection - you'll be surprised how often you play it.

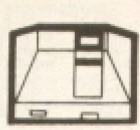


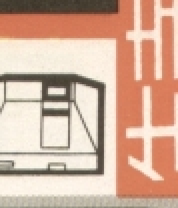
▲ *Things are getting dicey, with the screen*



LET'S GET FRUITY

For extra excitement, try changing the blocks into one of the bizarre alternatives. The fruit option changes the jewels into bananas, cherries, apples and the like. To really confuse, select the dice option - it's very difficult to keep track of the dots! Still, if you're bored of the standard jewels these choices add that little bit more to the game. Experiment!







COMMENT

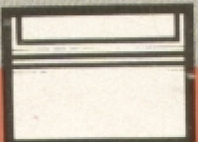


JULIAN

Although Columns sounds rather dull, it's the sort of game that you keep on coming back to time and time again because it's simple, playable and very addictive indeed. It starts off easy, but when you get to high levels the jewels fall at very high speed, and your hand-to-eye co-ordination is given a really good work-out. A special mention must go to the sound, which is one of the best tunes I've heard on the Sega. Columns might not be the most exciting game in the world, but it's a great way to unwind after you've just dispatched some big baddie with your lasers, or have kicked the heads of endless street gangs in the latest beat 'em up! Try it out - you'll be surprised at just how much fun it is!

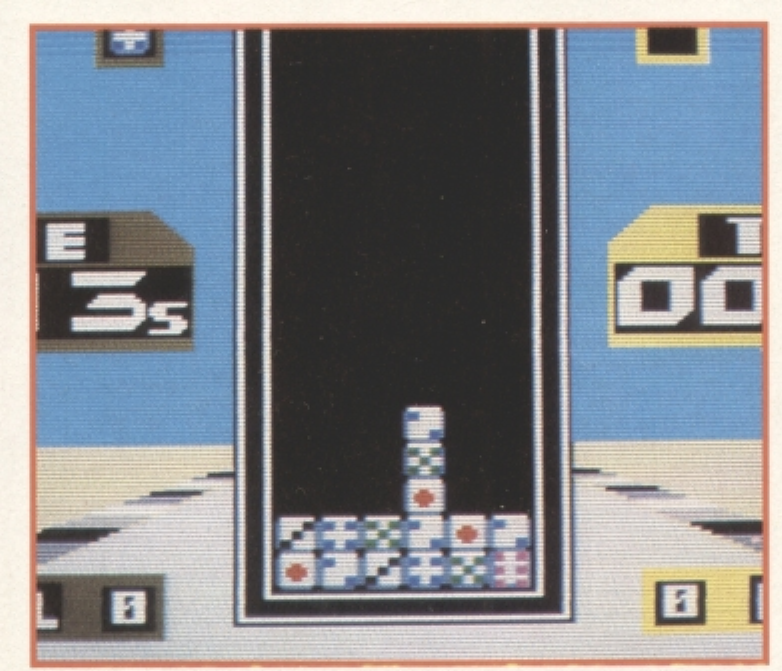


BY: SEGA
PRICE: £29.99
RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY/MED
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 9
RESPONSIVENESS: GREAT



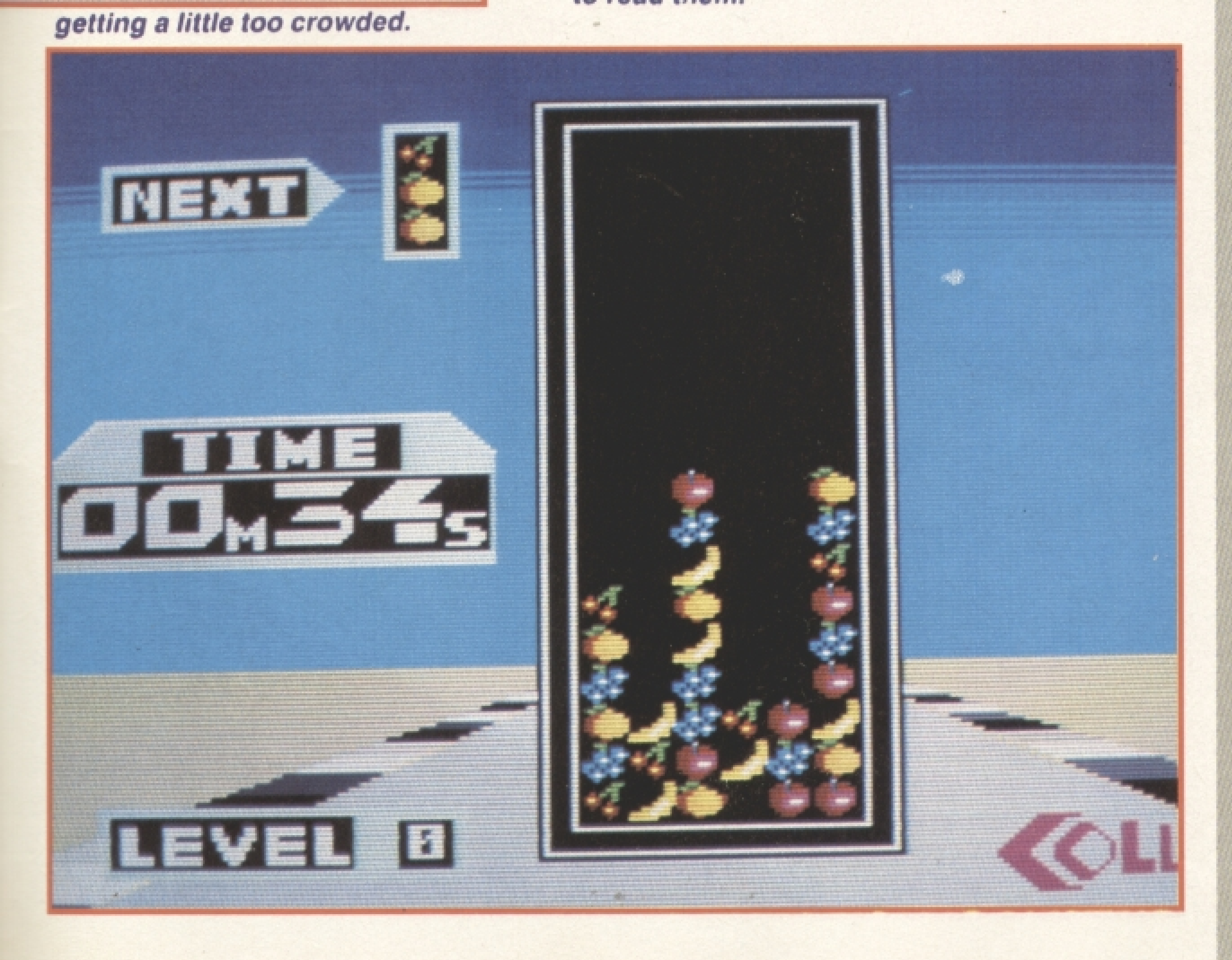


1-2 PLAYERS



▲ *The dice come tumblin' down, making it tricky to read them.*

getting a little too crowded.



PRESENTATION 84%
The intro screen is suitably classical, and the backgrounds add a neat graphic touch.

GRAPHICS 78%
Fairly basic, but with this sort of game it's to be expected.

SOUND 89%
Subtle, restrained effects and tunes that fit the game to a tee!

PLAYABILITY 93%
Addictive, therapeutic, absorbing, and very enjoyable.

LASTABILITY 88%
Although it won't grab your attention in the same way as an arcade game, you'll keep coming back to it.

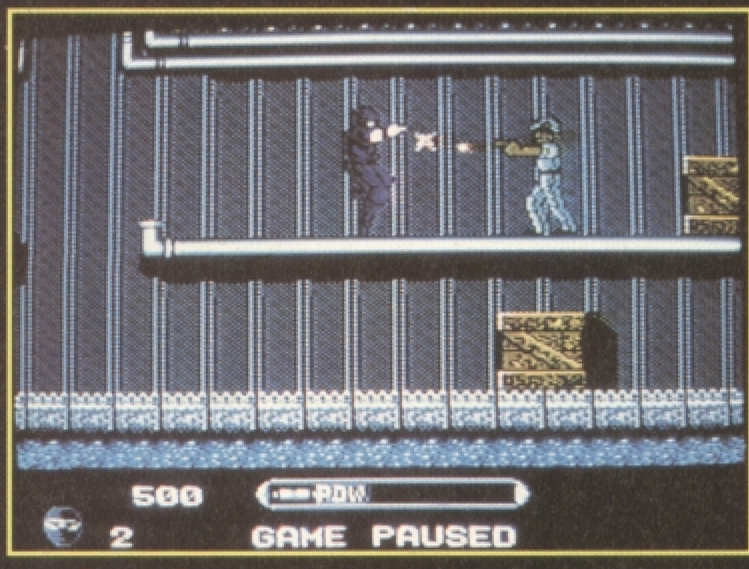
OVERALL 89%
A brilliant Tetris variant with a variety of options and playability coming out of its ears.

BLAC MAN

The Kids have been kidnapped! Unfortunately, it's not the crappy pop group, but actually some real children who have been nabbed by a mysterious bunch of smelly criminals. Your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to rescue the brats and gather info about the organisation behind this heinous crime.

Manta has an infinite supply of shuriken to help him on the journey, but kicking, jumping and somersaulting are also part of the repertoire. This helps, as the gang members carry guns - jumping bullets is a skill well worth learning. Information in the form of notes is scattered around the levels and points out secret rooms and bonuses.

End-of-level guardians present the toughest challenge in the hero's journey, and each has a certain weak point Manta must discover and exploit. So put on a silk balaclava and get going!



Ouch! Ouch! Please stop hurting me!



The end-of-level guardian zooms around the room.

The first boss, whose only weak spot is his head.

COMMENT



MATT

Hee-ya! My secret life as a Ninja makes me eminently suitable to review this game. I'm a big fan of beat 'em ups, but this really had nothing to make it stand out from the crowd. There aren't any interesting moves you can perform - just throwing shuriken and jumping - and the backdrops are uniformly dull and drab. Still, there's nothing like kicking the crepe paper out of baddies, and this gives you the chance to let off steam. The hidden rooms are clever, but this game suffers in comparison with, say, Double Dragon II.

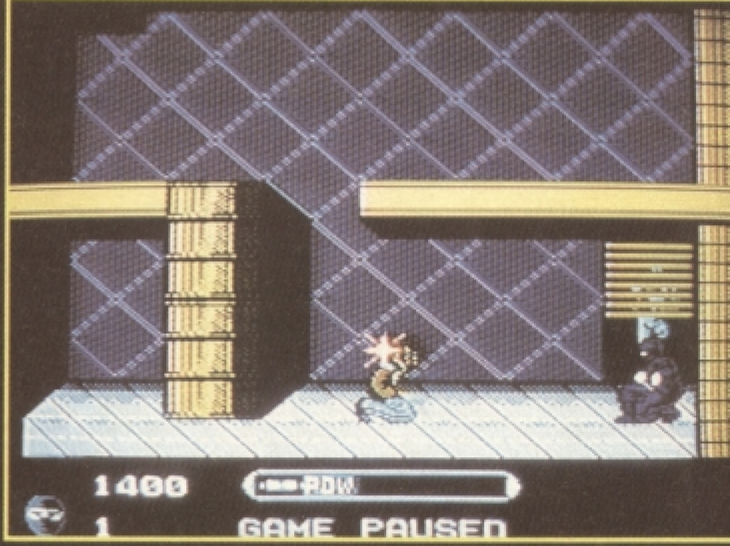
NINJA NIBBLES

Ninja grew out of the political situation in feudal Japan. Samurai, the knights beholden to their lords, had to follow a strict moral code in all their actions. So when a lord needed something underhand done - an assassination, for example - he would hire a Ninja to carry the task out. The Ninja were a secretive organisation who practiced ninjitsu, the art of stealth, weapons, and murder. Not the sort of people with whom to argue politics!

CK
TA



▲ *Me-e-e a-a-and my shadow-w-w, walkin' down the avenue...*



▲ *He! He! Another baddie meets his maker.*

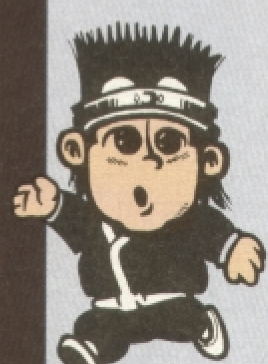
[redacted]

Some baddies can be grabbed by Manta and forced to talk. However most of them have absolutely nothing of use to tell, and just plead their ignorance. But some reveal important info as to the whereabouts of gang leaders and the captured children. Manta simply has to walk up to the baddies and grab them by the throat to start them spilling the beans.



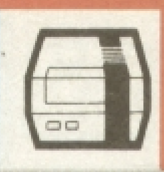


COMMENT



JULIAN

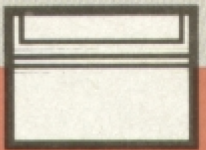
There are many things I like about this game, such as the fabulous between-level screens which tell a story, the fact that there are loads of secret rooms, and that the gameplay is fun with quite a bit of variety - especially the madcap flying ninja level where he looks like he's been strapped to flying bed. However, these decent features are let down by the naff in-game graphics (the sprites are awful and the animation is poor) and the rather average sound. Black Manta is a pretty good Shinobi type game, and should be enjoyed by ardent beat 'em up fans.

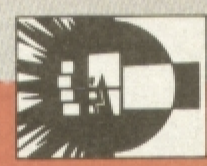




BY: NINTENDO
PRICE: £34.99
RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: EAST/MED
LIVES: 3
CONTINUES: 0
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: OK







PRESENTATION 82%

Multiple intro screens telling the story behind the game.

GRAPHICS 69%

Fairly basic sprites, with poor animation. The backdrops are no better.

SOUND 67%

Plinky-plonk all the way!

PLAYABILITY 80%

Enjoyable, with plenty of secret rooms to discover.

LASTABILITY 71%

It's quite tough, but doesn't have the really addictive spark that'll keep you coming back for more.

OVERALL 73%

A reasonably fun beat 'em up let down by poor graphics and sound.



CYBER POLICE

ESWAT

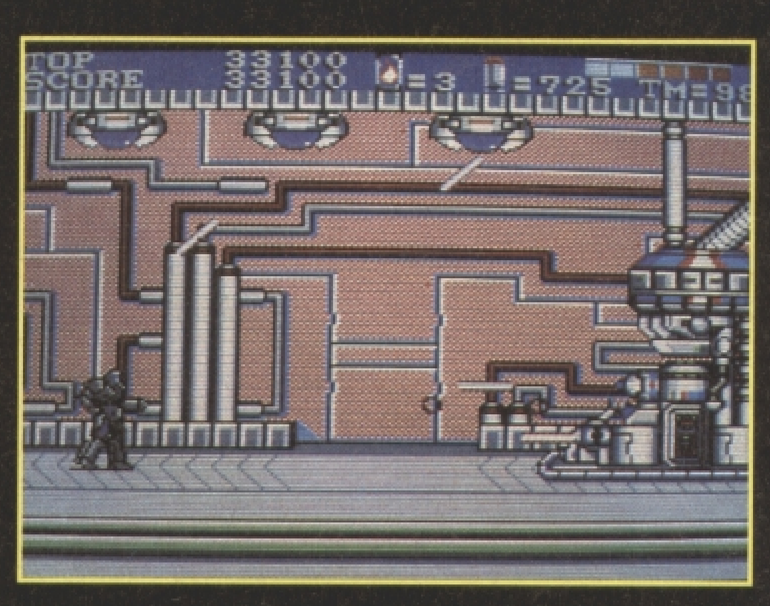
The city is under siege and only a heroic cop can save the day! Six ruthless crime bosses have clubbed together in order to bring a reign of chaos to the city. Violent crime is common place - no-one feels safe. The police are over-powered by the sheer enormity of the new crime wave. Enter the ESWAT (Enhanced Special Weapons and Tactics) team, a bunch of hardened cops with the greatest weaponry and armour that the city can provide.

You start the game as a lowly police officer aspiring to be a part of the elite ESWAT team. You need to prove your policing worth in order to qualify, and must first kill one of the crime bosses and his associated cronies to prove you're worth your stripes (and presumably, your armour).

Once you're in possession of the necessary armament, it's time to clean up the rest of the streets. There's five levels' worth of ESWAT excitement, and each level has four smaller scenes packed with felons to despatch to their graves. It's a one-on-one shoot-out at the end of each level, and success means one less member of the crime boss cartel. Failure isn't even worth contemplating...



▲ *Platform blasting action in Master System ESWAT.*



▲ *Lasers on the ceiling are a constant worry.*

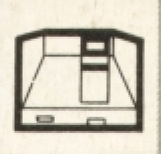
▼ *There's a crime boss in that robot somewhere!*

COMMENT



MATT

ESWAT isn't bad, but it bears very little resemblance to the arcade original - looking for all the world like an arcade Robocop variant. The backdrops are gaudy and completely unatmospheric and where's the groovy afterburners of the Megadrive game? The playability's the thing though, and ESWAT is quite entertaining - for a while. The game is pretty easy to complete, and won't really keep you at the Sega for long.



ESWAT ARSENAL

Our rozzer hero starts out life in this game with no armour whatsoever, but can absorb a few hits. Conquer a couple of scenes though, and you have extra protection from your suit as well as machine gun frolics. Collecting icons gives you various "smart" weaponry. Pressing the A and B buttons sets off what could be a ripple laser type affair, or even a whole spray of deadly bullets. It all depends on the icon collected.

COMMENT

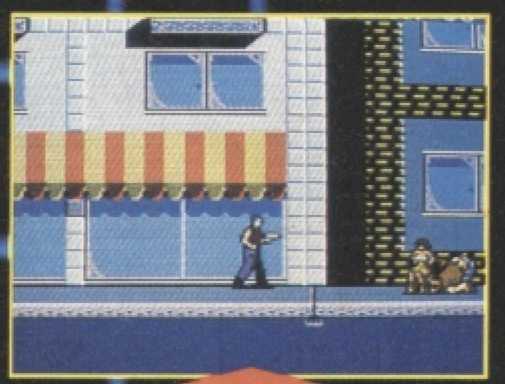


JULIAN

After the rather nifty arcade game, this is a bit of a disappointment. The original coin-op features a variety of mean 'n' meaty weapons, but the ones in this version are wimpy by comparison. Even the graphics are feeble compared to their arcade counterpart, with gaudy backdrops and small, poorly animated sprites. When you get down to playing it, once again the game is a let-down. It's great fun at first, but there are only five levels and they're very easy to get through. None of the end-of-level baddies offer much resistance, and anyone who's a half-decent player should be able to finish the game pretty quickly.

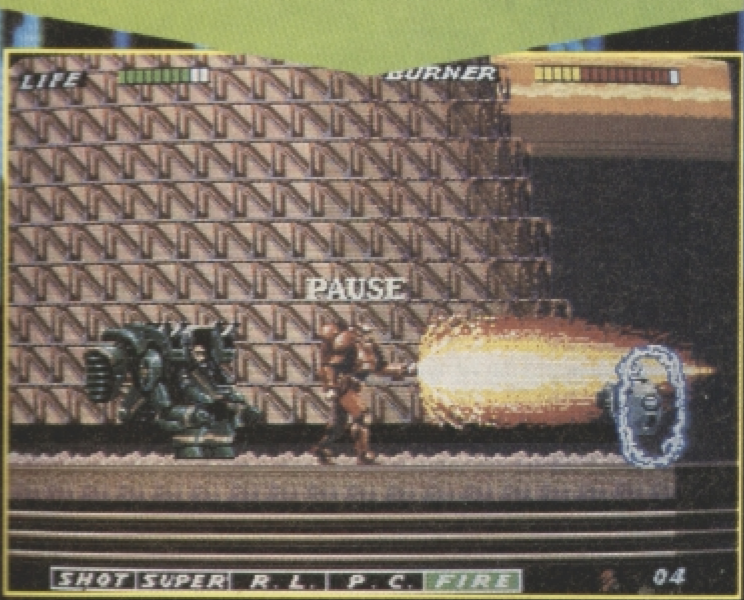


▲ *Matt's clapped out Escort makes an appearance in ESWAT.*



MEGADRIVE MAYHEM

ESWAT should be coming out next year on the Megadrive, and promises to be a completely different kettle of fish. The horizontally scrolling action has been replaced by an eight-way scroll-around, and there's also a number of extra weapons that can be bolted onto the ESWAT armour - including ground-hugging missiles, super-cannons and fuel for the suit's afterburners!



ESWAT PUNK PARADE

The amount of felons to be "brought to justice" is many and varied. The common knife-wielding punk should present no problem to the standard police-issue pistol, but later on things get a bit more tough. Among your end-of-level adversaries, you find a spinning maniac whose roller-coaster antics will bowl you for six! Look out also for a head honcho who uses a token female as a body shield (nifty blasting required there) and a crime boss tooled out in ESWAT style armour.

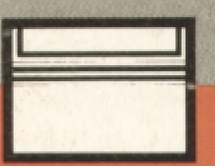


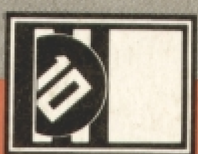
BY: SEGA

PRICE: £29.99

RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY
LIVES: 1
CONTINUES: 5
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: NOT BAD







PRESENTATION 63%
Overall, a tad lacking - the presentation screens look boring and the game lacks a polished feel.

GRAPHICS 61%
Urrgghh! Clashing colours a-go-go! Not very atmospheric or well-drawn for that matter.

SOUND 59%
White noise sound effects and monotonous, tinkly tunes.

PLAYABILITY 73%
Plenty of things to do at first, but tends to get a bit repetitive after a while.

LASTABILITY 62%
Five quite large levels, but the easy pace of the game means that you'll crack them quickly.

OVERALL 68%
A reasonably decent shoot 'em up, crying out for better graphics and sound



Constantly striving to bring you the latest in console coverage, MEAN MACHINES gives you a look at the latest Game Boy cartridges. Gosh!

TENNIS

Wimbledon! The atmosphere, the strawberries, the ticket touts. Tennis on the NES is faithfully reproduced on the Game Boy with all the options: four levels of difficulty, smash and lob, and even two players (via the Video Link).

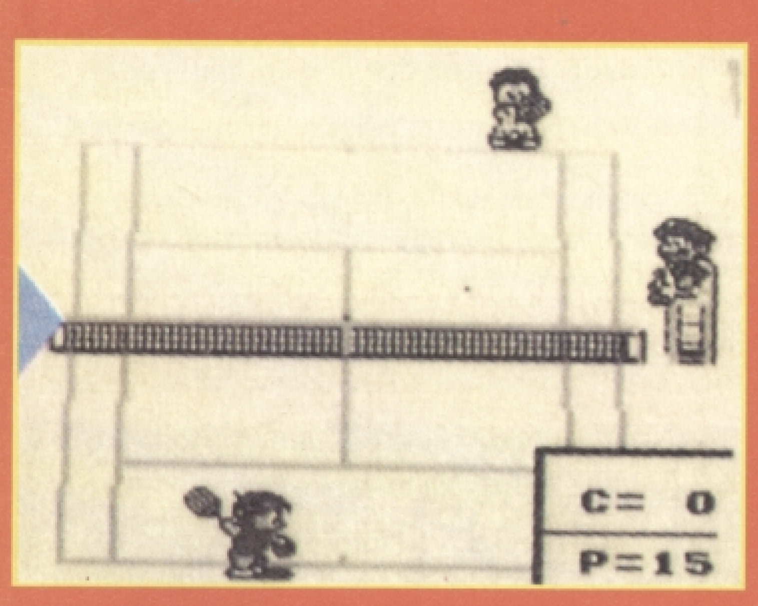
Learning how to serve well is crucial, as is knowing when to lob or smash. It's easy to get cocky and try to stand at the net and volley, but be warned - the computer player's no pushover!

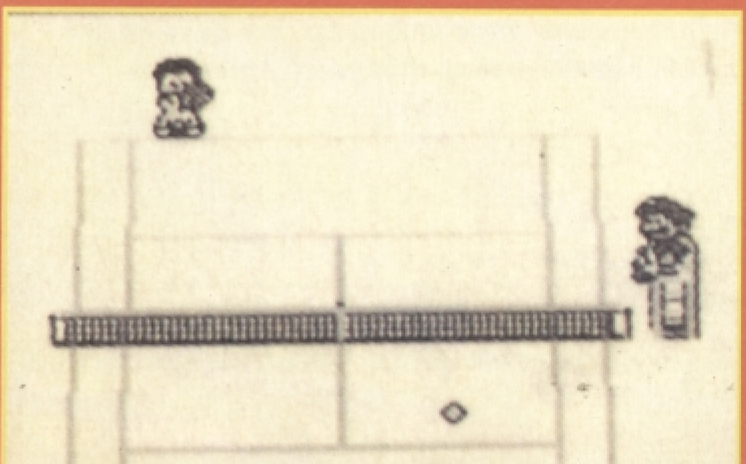
PRESENTATION	85%
GRAPHICS	88%
SOUND	75%
PLAYABILITY	87%
LASTABILITY	82%
OVERALL	86%

COMMENT

MATT: Being on a par with Boris Becker myself (ho ho), I've always enjoyed Tennis on the NES. The Game Boy version is very close indeed, and I love it! Bags of fun, this one is strongly recommended.

JAZ: Easily the best Tennis game available on any system. It's challenging, addictive, and lets you play virtually any shot you could normally do with a racket. Highly recommended.







Weather is a funny thing - ask Michael Fish. Storms, hurricanes, and heat waves occur with no real reason. Yet it's a lot worse in Sarasaland, where the clouds brought the arrival of Tatanga, a monster who has taken over the place. He even wants to marry Princess Daisy - gasp! Needless to say, Mario is none too chuffed at this prospect, and it's your job to guide him as he attempts to free the land and rescue the girlie.

If you've played any of the Mario games (and who hasn't), then this game will hold no surprises. The player guides the hero through the lands, collecting bonuses and mashing monsters as he goes. Super flowers, hearts, and coins are among the goodies to be had.

PRESENTATION	84%
GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	84%
PLAYABILITY	90%
LASTABILITY	89%
OVERALL	90%

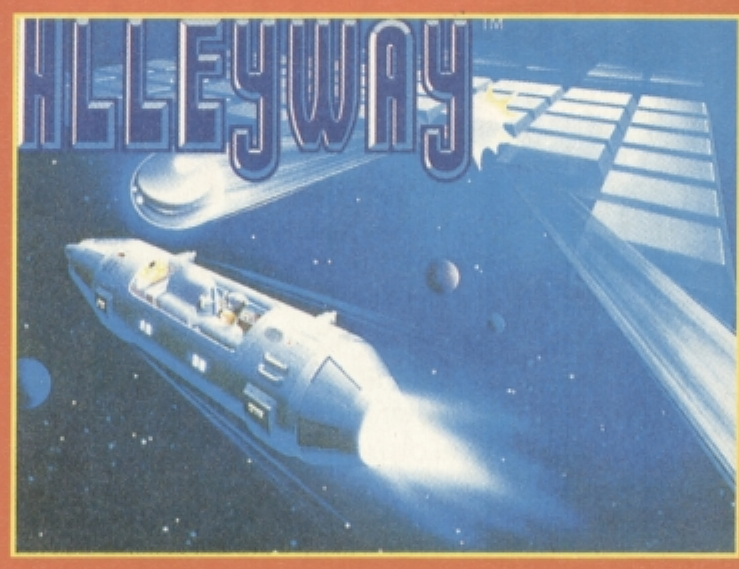
COMMENT

MATT: Playability to the nth degree! This game is guaranteed a semi-permanent place in my Game Boy, along with Tetris, of course. They don't come much better than this, with great graphics and a tough challenge.

JAZ: I agree - this is brilliant. It doesn't take long to finish the game, but there's loads of secret things to uncover if you do! A must

OH! DAISY DAISY
THANK YOU MARIO.

EBOY
ND-UP



ALLEYWAY

Eons ago, in an arcade far, far away, there was a game called Breakout. This was one of the very first arcade games ever to be seen in this country, and its exciting concept of using a bat and ball to demolish a wall of bricks made it a hit with the jaded Space Invaders crowd.

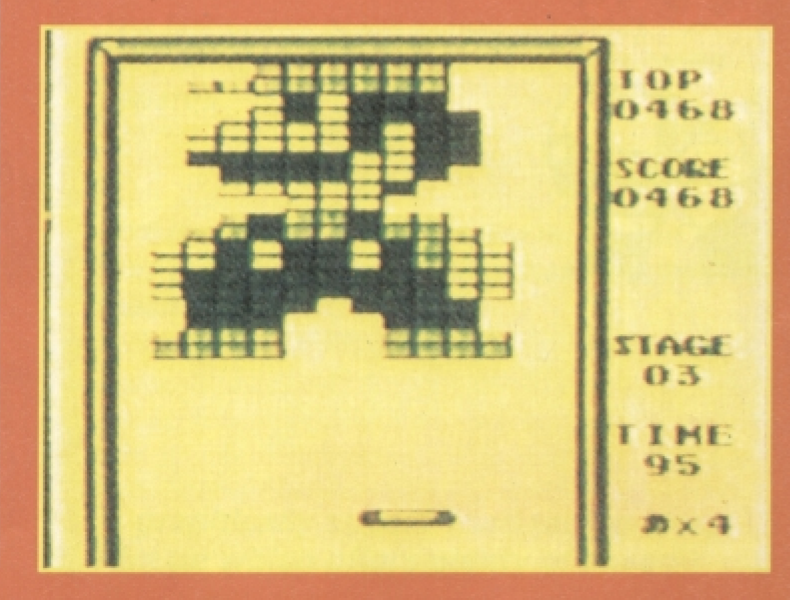
Unfortunately, this variant does not have much more to offer than the original. Bonus screens are available, as are screens in which the walls advance upon you! Mario himself is your guide through this game, only leaving you once all your lives are game.

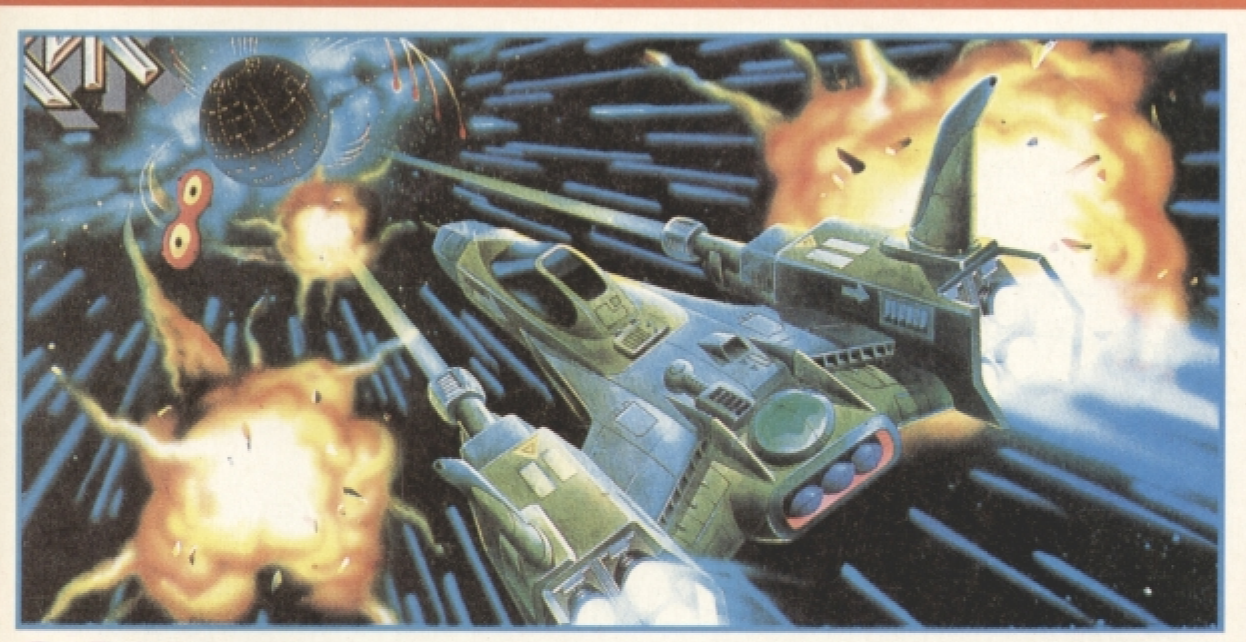
PRESENTATION	70%
GRAPHICS	59%
SOUND	68%
PLAYABILITY	51%
LASTABILITY	29%
OVERALL	33%

COMMENT

MATT: Bleugh! I was not exactly bowled over by this! There's no variety at all, and once you've finished a couple of screens, you'll be bored stiff.

JAZ: What a bore. Screen after screen of boring bricks to knock away, and hardly any variety. If this had a couple of power ups it might be okay. As it stands it's about as exciting as watching paint dry. If you're having trouble getting to sleep, play this - it's more powerful than any sleeping tablet!





SOLAR STRIKER

Hmm, a shoot 'em up. Would you be shocked to learn that aliens have invaded Earth, and that you and your souped-up ship are the world's only hope? You wouldn't? Well, neither were we. Solar Striker is a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up complete with power ups and dozens of unpleasant ET's who can't wait to be vapourised.

Control is simple enough, with fire and movement being your only options as you make your way to the Reticulon base. The obligatory bosses appear at the end of each level, with their own form of attack.

PRESENTATION	82%
GRAPHICS	72%
SOUND	70%
PLAYABILITY	72%
LASTABILITY	62%
OVERALL	69%

COMMENT

MATT: This shoot 'em up is adequate in all respects, but lacks the excitement and thrills to make it a real winner.

JAZ: After a couple of goes I got bored of this. It's alright, but there are no real surprises to keep you going back to it.

FIRE & FORGET II

This first release from French software house Titus is set in the far flung future. A conference of all world leaders is being held in the city of Megapolis, and the outcome of this historic event could be world peace. Hurrah! However, a ruthless gang of terrorists is driving towards the city with a large nuclear bomb and they intend to blow up the whole place - leaders and all - and then take over the world during the following confusion.

There's only one person who can save the day - and that's you! So grab the keys to your 850 horse power deathmobile, the Thundermaster II, arm its guns and missiles and take to the highway and destroy the villains before they complete their foul mission!

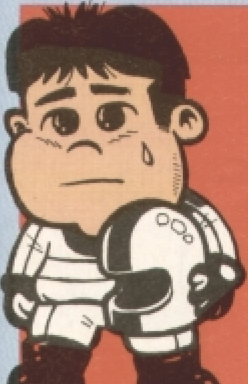
The 3D action is viewed from behind your car, and the object is to race down the road (or fly for a limited period of time if you manage to run over the special fuel cannisters), catch up with the convoy leader and destroy it. The ultimate aim is to destroy the bomb-carrying convoy leader on the fifth level.

Between you and the convoy leader is a load of other baddies, all of who want to trash your lovely vehicle - so avoid their shots and blast them before they crash into you!

A distance meter ticks down as you zoom along, so you know how far ahead the leader is, and once he's in your sights you can let rip with your missiles. When he's destroyed you move onto the next, more difficult level - can you make it to level five and save the world?


▲ A squadron of nasties approaches - kill 'em!

(SEGA) COMMENT


MATT

Vrooom! Dashing along the road blowing everything up is my idea of fun (I've got an Uzi attached to my Escort). This game gives a real feeling of speed, and the excellent scrolling helps to add atmosphere to the challenge. With so many factors to consider - collecting fuel pods, steering around the corners, and destroying anything silly enough to get in your way - the action remains fast and furious throughout. The end-of-level baddies present a tough fight, and not an insurmountable one; and I find myself constantly distracted by the rather pretty parallax-scrolling clouds! This game isn't the greatest ever, but it's lots of fun and one of the best driving shoot 'em ups on the Sega.

▼ Clouds in the sky, mountains in the distance, and a ruddy great gun on the car.

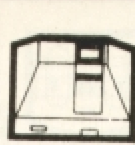

▼ Flying wibbly things on the attack.


▼ Now, Mr Jones, please make an emergency stop

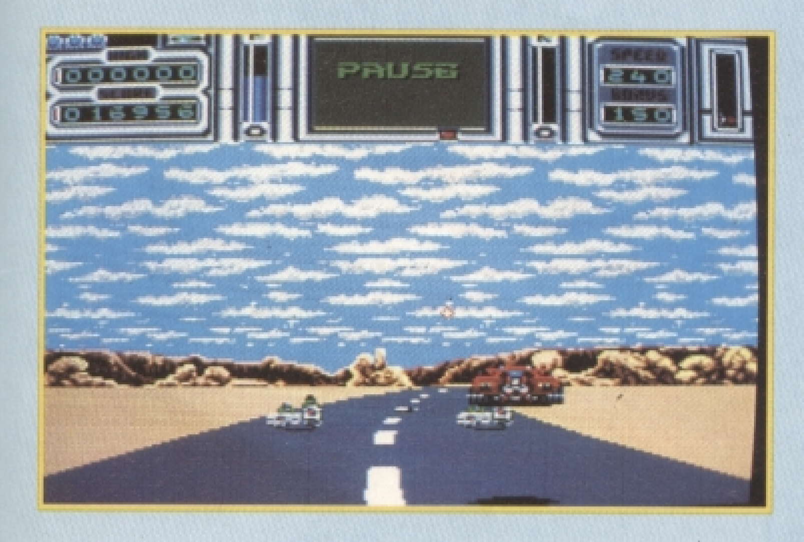


▲ Miss World 1990, seen here in her swimwear.







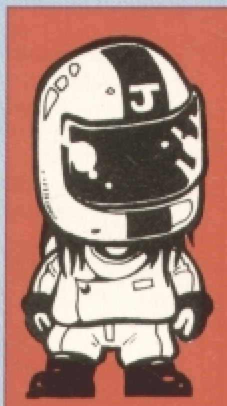
TAKE TO THE SKIES

Occasionally red fuel canisters are found on the road. Run over these and you'll be able to take off for a few seconds and blow up any flying baddies - or avoid the deadly gun emplacements found at the side of the road!



▲ *You've failed. The game over screen in all its glory.*

(SEGA) COMMENT



JULIAN

I prefer this to Battle Outrun and Chase HQ! In those games you just had to bump the enemies off the road - here you can let rip with your machine guns and missiles and blow up everything that gets in your way! The action is very fast and pretty tough, almost to the point of being off-putting at first. However, once you get used to the speed of things, you start getting into the action and rise to the considerable challenge. The graphics and sound are both brilliant - the road is particularly smooth and convincing - and the update on the sprites is excellent. A must for addicts of highway violence!

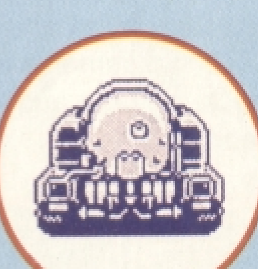


▲ *Beat these scores!*

THE CONVOY LEADERS

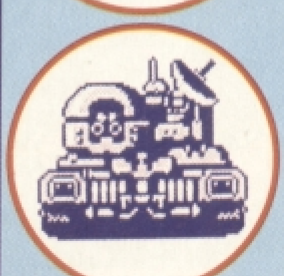
There are five different trucks to destroy - here's a list of them all.





ARMOURED FUEL TRUCK: Carries fuel for the rest of the convoy.

MINE DROPPER: Watch out when approaching 'cos this sucker drops mines.



RADAR VEHICLE: A fairly easy target - the convoy's information centre.

SWTO8/Q MISSILE VEHICLE: Deploys ground to ground missiles so take care.

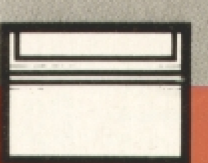


HEAD VEHICLE: Convoy leader, and the truck which carries the nuclear bomb.



BY: TITUS
PRICE: £29.99
RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: MED/HARD
LIVES: 6
CONTINUES: 2
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: VERY FAST







PRESENTATION 81%

A few in-game presentation screens, but no options.

GRAPHICS 90%

Very colourful, with excellent parallax scrolling and fast, smooth and convincing

SOUND 83%

Solid blasting effects and some racy tunes suit the action very well.

PLAYABILITY 87%

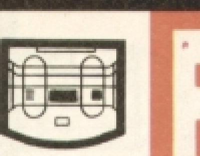
The fast speed of the action is almost off-putting at first - but perseverance reaps rewards.

LASTABILITY 79%

Five levels doesn't sound like much, but they're long and completing them requires much practice.

OVERALL 82%

A graphically superb road racing shoot 'em up which offers plenty of speedy thrills and spills.



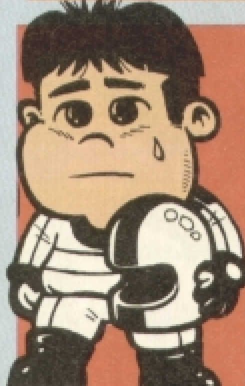
▲ *Hooray! But will you have the interest to try the next level?*

WATCH YOUR FUEL

The Thundermaster II might be the most wicked mega-powered four-wheeled vehicle of doom, but it doesn't half guzzle petrol. A fuel gauge ticks down whenever the car is moving, and if it reaches zero you lose a life. How do you keep going? Easy - you just run over the fuel canisters that appear after you've destroyed certain baddies!

▲ *Blobby jobbies go wobbly in Dobly!*

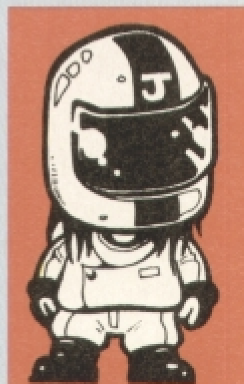
AMSTRAD COMMENT



MATT

Deary me, what an awful effort to be one of the very first Amstrad games! This is so much worse than the Sega game, it could (and probably should) be a different game. The scrolling's atrocious, the road doesn't meet the horizon, and the steering is very slow to respond. Amstrad GX4000 Fire and Forget II delivers an insipid, two-dimensional challenge that'll have you nodding off in a matter of minutes. One to be avoided like the plague, methinks.

AMSTRAD COMMENT



JULIAN

I played Sega Fire and Forget II first, and had high hopes for this - after all the GX4000 console features a load of hardware chips, and therefore this version should be even better! However, all I can say is the programmers couldn't have used them - this version is dire in the extreme. The scrolling is jerky, the car moves and responds like a badly crippled slug, the road update is juddery and unconvincing, and most of the sprites look like marauding blue cabbages. All these factors piled together make for a game that's about as much fun as having your teeth pulled out. In fact the only good thing I've got to say is that GX4000 software surely can't get any worse than this.

VIVA LA DIFFERENCE

Fire and Forget II is one of the first games to be simultaneously launched on two consoles, in this case the Sega Master System and Amstrad GX4000. The basic plot and the way the game works is the same on both machines, but the actual execution is very different on both versions. The Sega comments and ratings are on this page, and overleaf are the GX4000 comments and ratings - check 'em both and see what we mean.

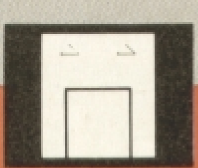
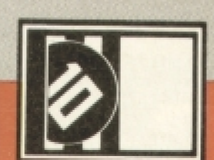






BY: TITUS
PRICE: £24.99
RELEASE DATE: NOV
GAME DIFFICULTY: MED/HARD
LIVES: 6
CONTINUES: 2
SKILL LEVELS: 1
RESPONSIVENESS: VERY FAST



PRESENTATION 75%
Crummy title screen, a few in-game screens, but no options.

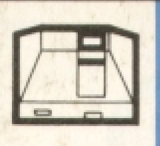
GRAPHICS 43%
Rubbish sprites, jerky scrolling and dreadful 3D update.

SOUND 71%
Pretty good tunes and fairly good effects.

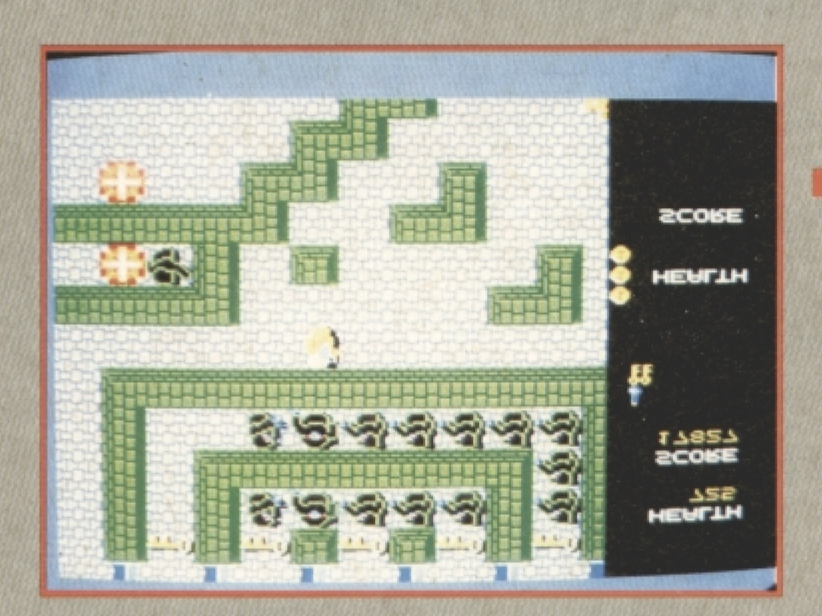
PLAYABILITY 37%
The unbelievably sluggish controls and dreadful visuals make playing this a chore.

LASTABILITY 21%
Completing the game is hard, but it's so bad you won't even want to bother.

OVERALL 33%
An utterly dreadful game in every respect. Even if you're desperate, wait for better GX4000 games to come along.



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US Gold are so pleased with their four new Sega games - Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade, Paperboy, Impossible Mission and Gauntlet - that they're going to give a copy of each one away to the lucky winner of this amazing competition.

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So what have you got to do to stand a chance of winning this skill prize? Well, just answer the unbelievably simple question below, put the answer on the back of a postcard or sealed-down envelope and send it off to: GOSH LUMME IF I WIN THE PRIZE I'LL FALL OVER WITH EXCITEMENT COMP, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU.

Oh yes, we nearly forgot the question. It's:

Which of the four US Gold games features a whip-cracking hero?

We told you it was easy. By he way, the closing date is Dec 18th - so get your entries in before then.









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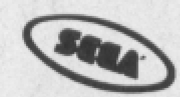
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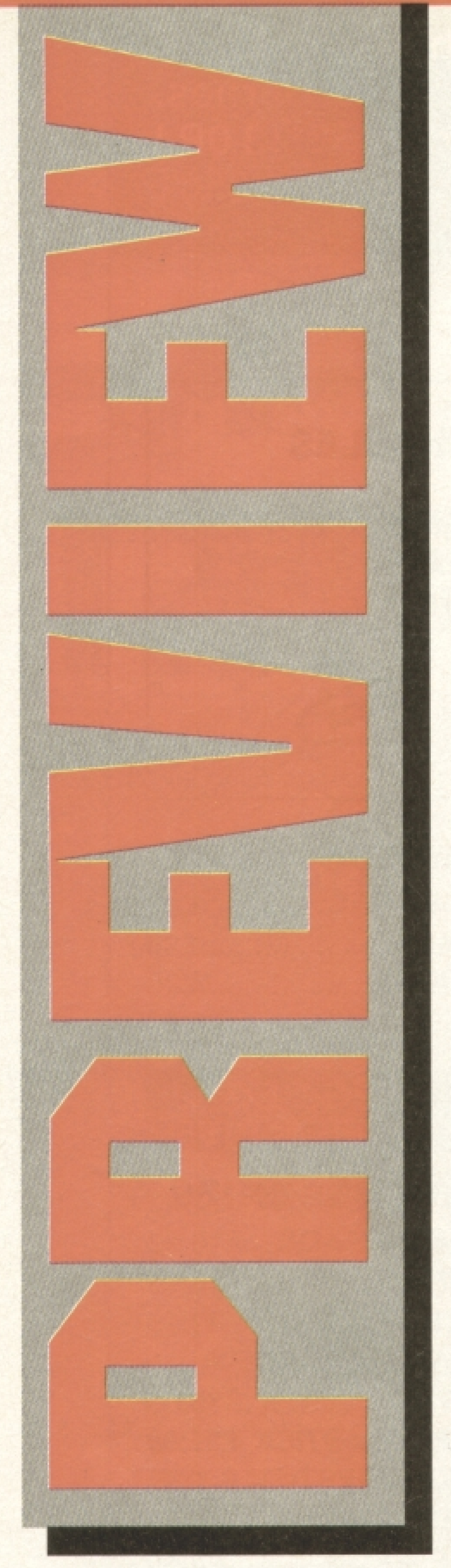
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MM 11/90





Everyone's favourite gun-toting, metallic keeper of the peace is back in Robocop II. Having disposed of the evil arch-villain Clarence Boddicker in the original film, Robocop returns to bring law and order to the streets of future Detroit.

The city is being overrun by criminals, and drug barons are making huge wads of cash by selling Nuke, a massively addictive drug. They must all be brought to justice, and the guy to do just that is Robocop!

Just like the original movie, it's action all the way as our hero battles a whole army of gun-toting baddies, and eventually takes on the huge, multi-armed, maniacal Robocop II - OCP's proposed successor to Robocop!

Ocean have got the licence to produce an official Robocop II game, which will hit the streets early in December on GX4000, and next year on Nintendo.

The game closely follows the plot of the film, with the player guiding Robocop around a platform and ladders environment, dodging hazards, blasting villains and collecting Nuke.

There are also sub-games involving puzzle type problems which Robocop solves to progress to later levels, and there's even an Operation Wolf-style shooting section where Robocop recalibrates his sights.

Judging by the screen shots pictured here, Robocop II looks like it certainly packs a punch. But as to how it plays, you'll just have to find out when we review it next month!

▼ *Our hero must climb the different levels to complete them.*

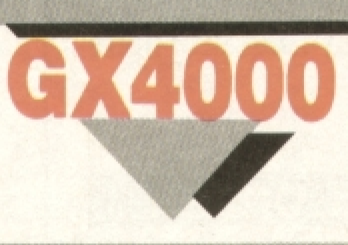


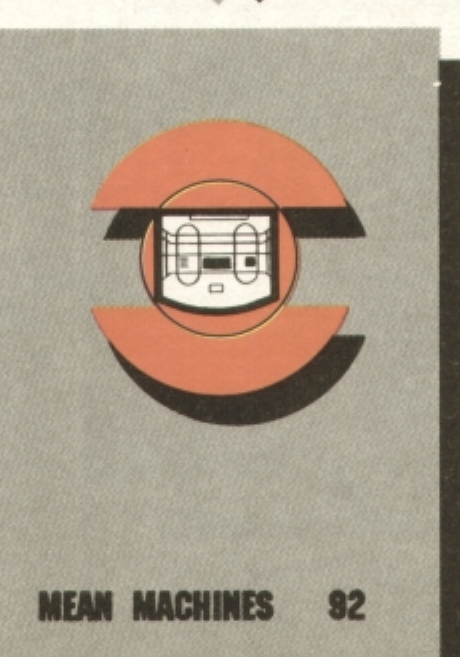


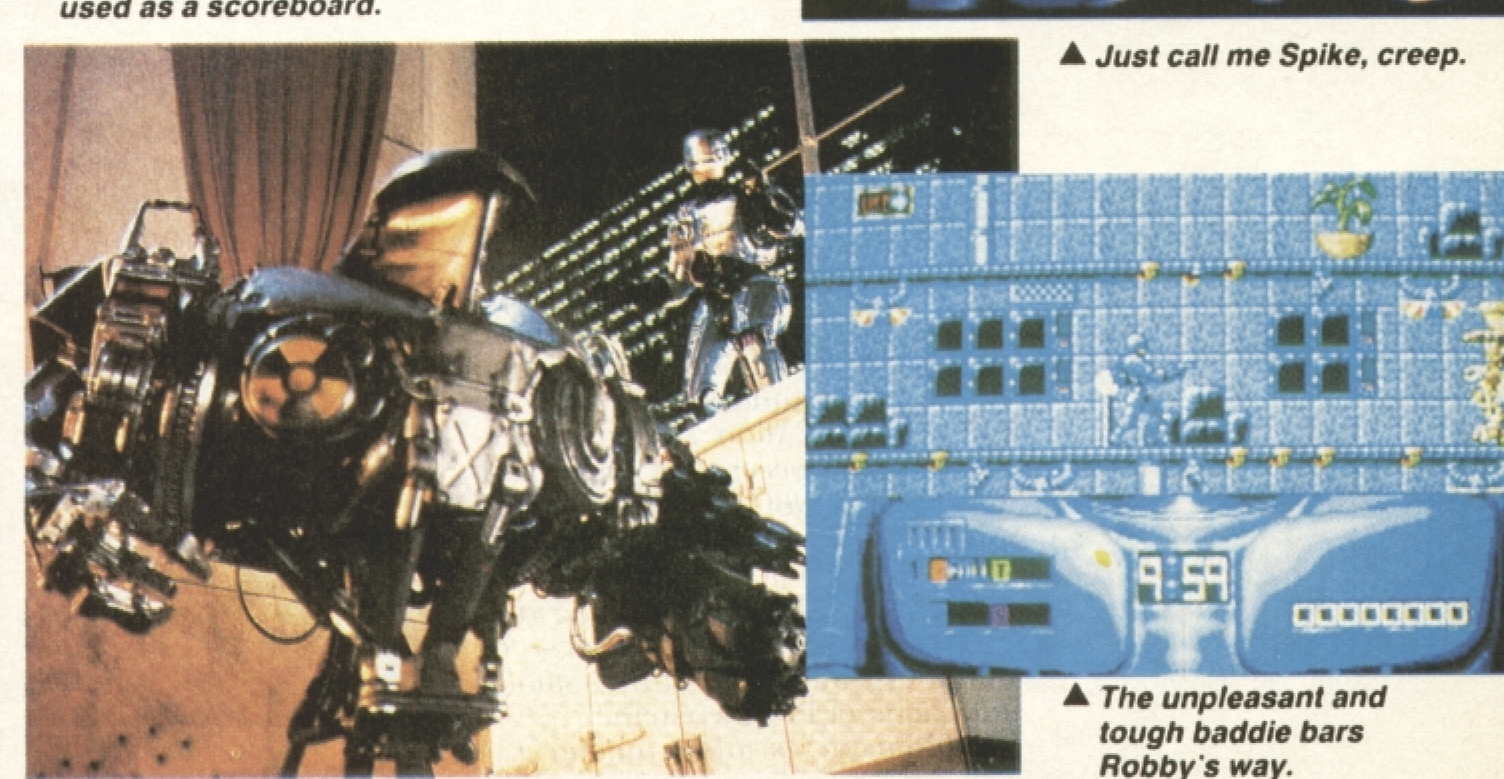
▲ *Note the Robo-torso used as a scoreboard.*



▲ *Just call me Spike, creep.*



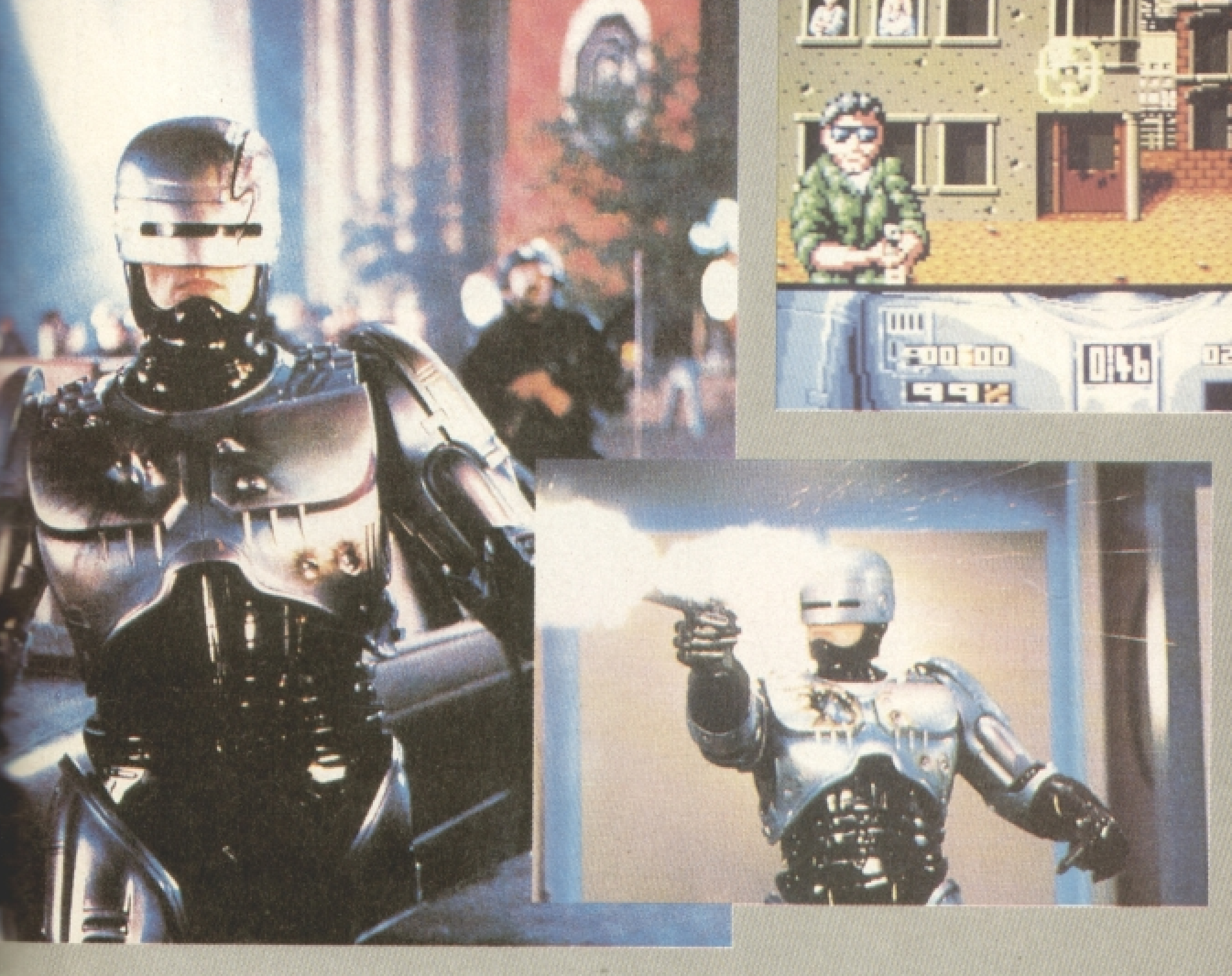




▲ *The unpleasant and tough baddie bars Robby's way.*



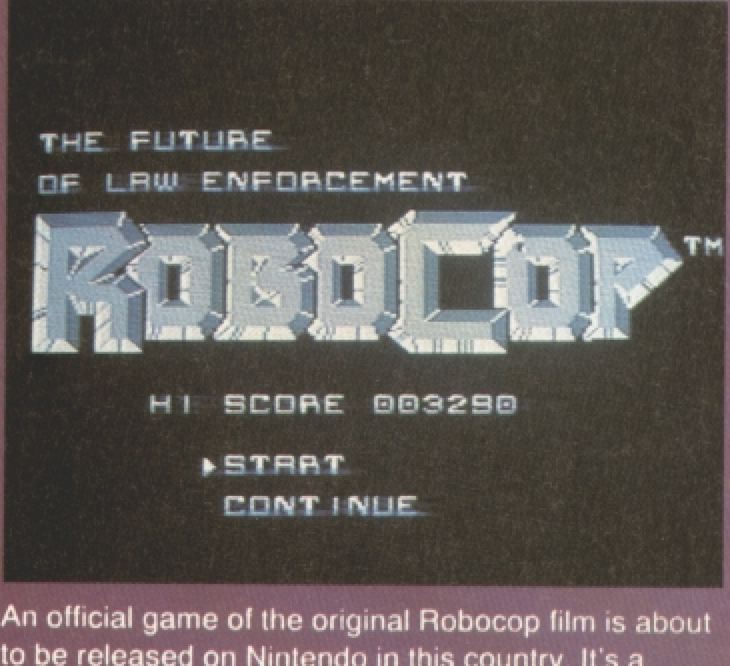




◀ *The Operation Wolf-style shoot out in the second level, with limited ammo and time!*

▼ *Avoid the lightning unless you want to fall off the screen!*







▲ *Robocop's gun makes up for his other deficiencies.*



▲ *I'm gonna shoot that chopper right out of the sky!*

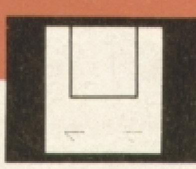
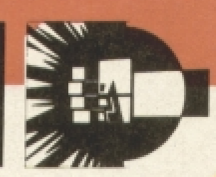
An official game of the original Robocop film is about to be released on Nintendo in this country. It's a platforms and ladders game loosely based around the Robocop coin-op which appeared in the arcades a couple of years ago. From what we've seen, the graphics look a bit bland and dull, but hopefully the gameplay will be up to scratch. We'll be reviewing it next month, so don't move, creep!



BY: OCEAN
PRICE: TBA

RELEASE DATE: DEC
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: TBA
CONTINUES: TBA
SKILL LEVELS: TBA
RESPONSIVENESS: NOT BAD











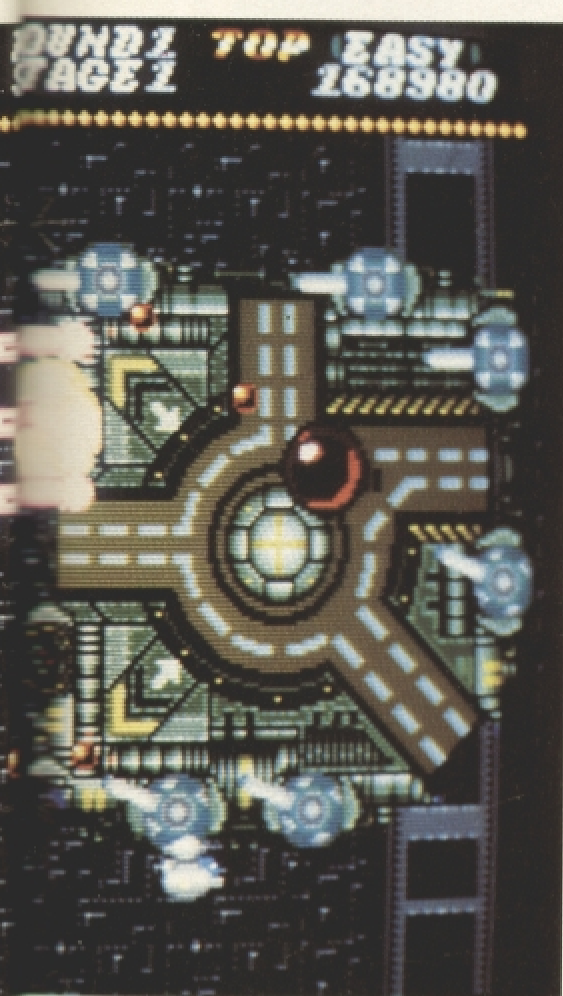
An alien force has invaded, and only one ship is equipped to tackle the menace - the Hellfire. With four different laser modes (forward, backward, side-shot, and four-way diagonal) to choose from, the ship is deposited near the alien fleet and then flies to death or glory - which one is up to you!

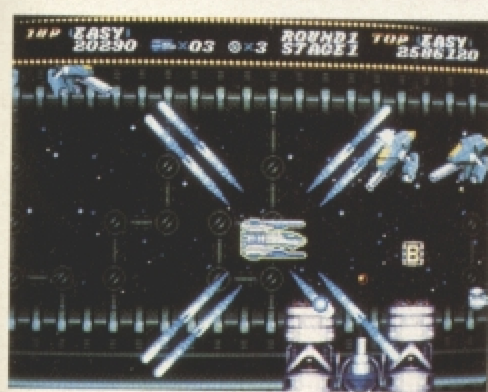
Controlling the craft is easy, but knowing which weapon to use at any one point takes practice and common sense. A super-shot fries the foes, but the number of these is limited. Power-ups, speed-ups, and extra super-lasers are dotted around, but be warned - they're always heavily guarded. Six huge levels of enemies await Hellfire, and only the most skilled pilot stands a chance against the awesome array of death-dealing foes between him and victory. A superlative shoot 'em up, a full review follows in the next issue of MEAN MACHINES.....











▲ *Bonus points - 400 to 10000 - are gained by grabbing the B token.*

COLOUR-CODED FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE

Each of the four types of weapon has a colour, so that when you cycle through them, you can tell which you've selected. Four-way is blue, side-shot is green, rear-shot is yellow, and forward is pink! So there's no excuse for making the wrong choice; although you'll be a cloud of vapourised atoms, so making excuses won't be easy!



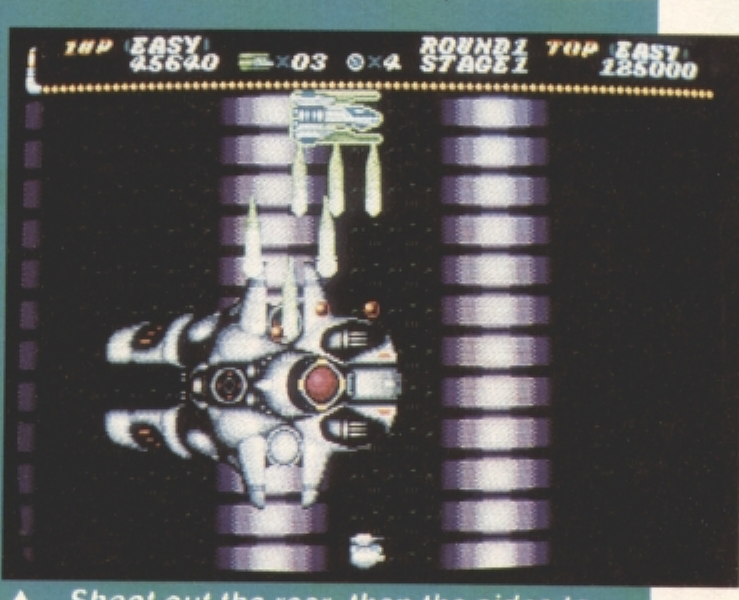
▲ *Forward fire is the most powerful weapon - especially with a few power-ups!*



▲ *Four-way, the MEAN MACHINES team's favourite blaster!*



▲ *The longer you take, the closer this baddie gets!*



▲ *Shoot out the rear, then the sides to destroy the first guardian.*



▲ *Rear fire is the weakest of all, but can help in tight spots.*

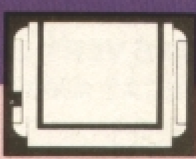


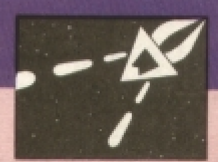
BY: TOAPLAN

PRICE: TBA

RELEASE DATE: NOW (IMPORT)
GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
LIVES: 4
CONTINUES: 9
SKILL LEVELS: 2
RESPONSIVENESS: MEGA







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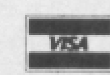
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YOB'S GOSSIP

Another month, another dollar! What's been going on in the crazy, hazy world of consoles this month, then? Well, I've been sniffing around to dig up the dirt and supply you with the usual pile of gossipy tripe. And here it is. So feast your proverbials...

ARE THEY SERIOUS

Laugh? I nearly threw Gary Harrod to the tramps when I heard the name of a new Megadrive game currently in development in Japan. It's called Magical Flying Hat Turbo Adventure! What the hell are these people on? Certainly not orange juice, that's for sure. Still, ten out of ten for originality...

PIRACY PROBLEMS?

There's virtually no piracy problems on the consoles scene in Europe. However, in the Taiwan and Korea, where they copy everything from snazzy underwear to mega-expensive watches (and copy them very well, too), there's a b-i-i-g problem. Not only do they produce pirate Nintendo games, they go one better - one cartridge has 63 different games on it! Blinking flip! The 63in1, as it's called, is the same size as a normal official Nintendo cartridge, but has six special mega-memory ROMs upon which all the games are stored. What are the they? Well, here's the list - just check them out! PacMan, Galaga, Dig Dug, Urban Champion, Front Line, Milk and Nuts, Popeye, Balloon Fight, Joust, Excite Bike, Pinball, Donkey Kong Jnr, Mario Bros, Circus Charlie, Mappy, Millipede, Arabian, Tennis, Penguin Adventure, Macross, Baseball, Lunar Ball, Chack 'n' Pop, Lode Runner, Kung-Fu, Ninja, Road Fighter, F1 Race, Exerion, Combat, Formation Z, Super Mario Bros, B-Wings, Twin Bee, 1942, Bomber Man, Othello, Star Force, Mahjong IV, Lode Runner II, Ice Climber, Battle City, Duck Hunt, Wild Gunman, Hogan's Alley, Galaxian, Sky Destroyer, Mahjong II, Donkey Kong, Keykong II, Marpman, Clu-Clu Land, Pooyan, Binary Land, Wrestle, Devil World, Gobang, Golf, Burger Time, Helicopter, Ninja II, City Connection and Tetris II.

Incredible, eh? And the price? Around £30.00! What a shame that this cartridge is completely and utterly illegal...

TETRIS SIX-PACK

Continuing on the piracy theme, another dodgy cart which is apparently available on Nintendo in the far East is the Tetris Family. It features six puzzle games - Nintendo Tetris, Tengen Tetris, Welltris, Plotting, Block Hole and Columns. A pretty amazing collection of puzzle games - it's shame that possession of the cartridge is a criminal offence. But then life's a beach.

WIZBALL II

Wizball is one of my all-time favourite Commodore 64 games - it's a really weird scrolling shoot 'em up in which you have to collect blobs of colours and paint the landscape while blasting all manner of strange baddies. But what has this got to do with consoles, you may be wondering?

Well, the sequel to this wacko game - Wizball II - is to appear on the GX4000 later next year on the Ocean label. It's being programmed by the wonderful, hunky and oh-so-talented Sensible Software crew, so it's bound to be totally splendiferous.

GAZZA'S ON GX4000

A game based around the skillful international and blubbering soccer person extraordinaire Paul "Gazza" Gascoigne is soon to appear on the GX4000 console under the auspices of Entertainment International.

Those in the know say that this football simulation will use "all the capabilities of the GX4000's hardware" and "will be very playable indeed". Hmmm! The last Gazza game was about as much fun as sticking your hand in a garbage grinder. Let's hope this one's better.

KONIX SHOCK NEWS

Sadly, Konix have run into financial difficulties and the receivers have been called in. The chances of this potentially wonderful machine ever seeing the light of day are now slim - it all depends whether another big company will step in and buy up the entire machine lock, stock and barrel. I'll keep you posted...

SUPER MINI-COMP

Alright, that's it for this month. But before I sign off, here's a little competition courtesy of yours truly, just to fill up the rest of the page. If you read this magazine from cover to cover you'll find out what kinds of car those nutters Matt and Jaz drive. If you can find what they are, put them down on the back of a postcard or sealed-down envelope and send it off to: MY EAGLE SHARP EYES SOON SUSSED OUT YOUR MARVELLOUS MOTORS, MEAN MACHINES, PRIORY COURT, 30-32 FARRINGDON LANE, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. The winner will be sent two games for his or her machine - so don't forget to put which console you own on your entry. Am I generous or what?


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